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United States
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Foreign
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Service

April 1989

Report and Recommendations of the Committee on Civil Service and Foreign Service Personnel Management Issues

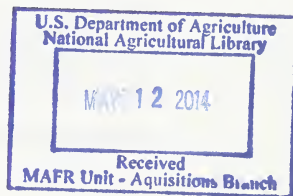


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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Foreign
Agricultural
Service

Washington, D.C.
20250

April 27, 1989

TO: All FAS Employees

FROM: Thomas O. Kay
Administrator

SUBJECT: CS/FS Committee Report and Recommendations

Attached is the full report and recommendations of the Committee on Civil Service and Foreign Service Personnel Management Issues.

I strongly endorse their report and recommendations and I encourage everyone to read it carefully.

I believe you will agree with me that the Committee did an outstanding job in analyzing the problems inherent in our dual personnel system and that implementation of its recommendations will help resolve many of the problems we have all faced.

The reaction I have received so far from employees at all levels in FAS is very heartening. As I depart, I am confident that FAS can again create "a partnership for success" that will serve its needs and the needs of employees now and in the future.

Attachment



P R E F A C E

The objectives of the Committee on Civil Service and Foreign Service Personnel Management Issues were:

- (1) to examine the major issues resulting from the interaction of a dual personnel system,
- and
- (2) to make recommendations to the Administrator on how we can overcome the problems both perceived and real.

The Committee approached its task very seriously. The task was difficult and at times agreement was elusive. In the end, all Committee members were able to agree on recommendations which we firmly believe will help FAS to manage its dual personnel system efficiently and effectively and in a manner to assure meaningful careers to both Civil Service and Foreign Service employees.

We want to thank FAS Administrator, Tom Kay, for taking initiatives to ameliorate problems stemming from the operation of the dual personnel system. Establishment of this Committee was the most recent of those initiatives and, like the others, it was undertaken at considerable risk.

We also recognize the positive approach taken by employees at all levels of FAS in solving the problems confronting us. Specifically, we want to cite the direct input employees made to the Committee, the views provided by participants in the recent supervisory/managerial training program, and the steps taken by the EEO Advisory Committee to foster an environment in which dialogue, learning and understanding could occur.

Finally, we wish to thank FAS Management for its support in making resources and expertise available from inside and outside the organization. These were invaluable in helping the Committee to understand and appreciate the complexity of its task.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP
CHAIRPERSON: JOHN WILLIAMS/MANAGEMENT

FOREIGN SERVICE

CIVIL SERVICE

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Ed Missiaen

EC Marvin Lehrer

Kerry Reynolds

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Technical Support:

Chief, Personnel Programs

Charles Soisson

Personnel Management Spec1st.

Tom Fox

O V E R V I E W

The Committee, in examining the problems resulting from the management of a dual personnel system, concluded that there is a perception of unfairness in how the system functions. Some believe this unfair treatment results from discriminatory practices based on race, age, gender, etc. Others attribute it to the mismanagement of the dual personnel system.

The Committee on Civil Service and Foreign Service Personnel Management Issues was established to review the narrow issues surrounding the operation of the dual personnel system. We believe our recommendations address not only these issues but the broader issues relating to perceptions of fairness in FAS.

The principal cause of the perception of unfairness in FAS is insensitivity, especially insensitivity to cultural, racial, age, and gender differences in the work force. Secondary causes include the following:

1. Insufficient attention has been given to career advancement opportunities for Civil Service employees. In effect, FAS employees have been told that Foreign Service employees have "careers" and Civil Service employees, professional and clerical, have "jobs." This perception has been substantiated in the eyes of many employees by the fact that most high level positions, including all program area Assistant Administrators, are filled by Foreign Service Officers; and that there is a disproportionate representation of Blacks and women in the low grade support positions versus a high proportion of white males in high grade management positions.
2. Personnel policies have not been applied equitably across program areas. For instance, the Assistant Administrators appear to have applied promotion policies inconsistently.
3. Many FAS managers are inexperienced in managing a diverse work force.
4. There has been insufficient sensitivity and management training in FAS.

The widespread perception of unfairness has had several negative effects on the organization, including the following:

1. An atmosphere characterized by cynicism, skepticism, and even paranoia has evolved in FAS. Management is not trusted.
2. Various WE versus THEY situations have developed in FAS: Civil Service versus Foreign Service, Blacks versus Whites, support staff versus professionals, etc.
3. Many people, especially Blacks, do not apply for advertised jobs because of a belief that someone has been "pre-selected."
4. Many employees feel alienated and isolated.

5. Gripping, low morale, formal and informal complaints pervade FAS.
6. This problem and its effects have tarnished the public image of FAS.

The Committee's recommendations in the areas of Career Advancement, Recruitment, Communications, Management Skills and Orientation, and the Personnel Advisory Committee address not only those specific problem areas, but also deal with the causes of this overall problem of a perception of unfair treatment.

S U M M A R Y O F M A J O R R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

The Committee identified five broad problem areas that it felt were contributing to the more fundamental problem of fairness in the operation of the dual personnel management system. It developed a total of thirty-nine recommendations it feels are worthy of serious consideration by the Administrator in consultation with his top management staff. Many of the recommendations relate to one another while others stand alone.

The Committee identified a number of these as major recommendations that would have broad impact on resolving the problems inherent in the operation of the dual personnel system in FAS. These major recommendations are listed below. More detailed information on these and other recommendations of the Committee are included in the Recommendations section of this report.

1. Career Advancement Summary

To preserve the agency's institutional memory and continuity, the Administrator should provide for a well defined career path for Civil Service employees in every program area, at every management/supervisory level. The Administrator should designate all positions as Civil Service, Foreign Service or "either/or" positions. This plan should be outlined by June 15. In the interim, there would be no changes in FS/CS composition. As regards clerical/technical personnel, the agency should designate five (5) professional positions at the GS-9/11 level for which clerical and technical employees can qualify via career enhancement programs.

2. Recruitment Summary

We have made seven (7) broad recommendations for changing current FAS recruitment practices. Of these, the most visible changes would be broadening recruitment criteria and adding Civil Service representation to the FAS Recruitment Committee. In addition, we recommend an annual review of recruitment needs and improving our outreach efforts to notify potential minority applicants of our broadened criteria.

3. Communications Summary

To develop a more open communications environment, the Committee recommends a monthly memorandum from the Administrator to all employees. It is suggested that this memo announce all promotions, reassignments, awards and hirings; disseminate PAC decisions; and convey other personnel policy information to the FAS workforce. Secondly, it recommends improved orientation of new employees, including a sponsor program at the division level. In addition, it is recommended that re-orientation of returning FSO's receive increased emphasis.

4. Management Skills and Orientation Summary

To improve the management skills of supervisors and managers at all levels of the agency, the Committee recommends that all managers and supervisors who lack the required training in this area be required to complete training appropriate to their respective levels within six months. The Committee further recommends that all newly selected FAS/W supervisors and FSO's returning to supervisory positions be required to complete supervisory training within a specified time period after assuming duties. Finally, the Committee recommends that the elements and standards of performance for supervisors and managers be expanded to include employee development and training.

5. Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) Summary

There is a need for a Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) to serve in an advisory capacity to the Administrator. But the role of the PAC needs to be more clearly defined if it is to operate in an accountable manner. The PAC should be established as an advisory body. Therefore, its membership should consist only of the Assistant Administrators and chaired by the Assistant Administrator for Management. It should be the responsibility of the PAC to evaluate assignment and policy issues and to formulate recommendations for consideration by the Administrator and his Associates.

B A C K G R O U N D

Implementation of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 created a dual personnel system in the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). The mission, goals, and objectives of FAS were not affected by the Act. The agency's authority to administer foreign agricultural programs of the Department of Agriculture are contained in other authorities. The Foreign Service Act only changed the personnel system for employees assigned to carry out FAS programs and activities in foreign areas.

Prior to the Act, employees assigned overseas were under the Civil Service personnel system. Any employee who qualified for the Foreign Agricultural Affairs occupation could be assigned to an overseas position. Some employees served overseas for only one tour; others served multiple tours interspersed with tours in Washington; and still others spent virtually their entire career with FAS in various overseas assignments. Because all employees of the agency were under the Civil Service personnel system, there were no real distinctions between those who accepted one or more overseas assignments and those who never served overseas even though qualified.

A question frequently asked is, why did FAS choose to be included in the Foreign Service Act of 1980? The reasons have a historical perspective bearing on the stature and entitlements of its employees serving abroad. First, within the community of foreign affairs agencies, FAS frequently had difficulty obtaining diplomatic status and standing in the embassy. This adversely affected the agency's ability to deal with host country Ministers of Agriculture and other key government officials in representing U.S. agricultural interests. Choosing the Foreign Service personnel system gave FAS officers diplomatic titles that put them on an equal footing and status with other embassy officials.

Second, allowances and benefits accorded to foreign affairs agencies such as the Department of State, Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Information Agency were frequently more liberal than those available to non-foreign affairs agencies having an overseas service such as FAS, APHIS, and several other agencies of the Department of Agriculture, as well as other U.S. government agencies. While many of these inequities were subsequently ameliorated by amendments to Title 5 of the U.S. Code, conditions still exist that could create continuing inequities and differences in allowances and benefits for U.S. Government employees serving abroad in the non-foreign affairs agencies.

FAS participation in the Foreign Service personnel system assured that future inequities and differences in allowances and benefits for Foreign Service Officers would be minimized and their standing in representing U.S. agricultural interests would be on an equal footing with other foreign affairs agencies at U.S. posts around the world.

Upon inclusion of FAS in the Foreign Service personnel system, management devised criteria for grandfathering employees to the foreign service and took steps to develop a long-range plan that would build its foreign service cadre to a membership of 200 officers. The plan developed and agreed to by top management was set out in the Administrator's memorandum of October 14, 1983. The implementation of the plan resulted in a gradual reduction of the positions available for Civil Service employees at GM-14 and above in Washington. The plan was designed to give preference to Foreign Service Officers in filling these positions while on Washington assignment. Additionally, the plan required that Foreign Service Officers needed a Washington assignment commensurate with their class in the Foreign Service personnel system. Unfortunately, the plan gave little recognition to the impact it would have on the existing Civil Service workforce and it failed to address adequately the long-range career advancement opportunities of these employees.

Historically, Washington-based Civil Service employees provided much of the program expertise and maintained the continuity and institutional memory in the various program areas of the agency. Statistics on promotions of Foreign Service versus Civil Service employees show clearly that career advancement opportunities in Washington were limited in favor of the Foreign Service.

Implementation of the dual personnel system resulted in the perception by Civil Service employees that they were being unduly disadvantaged in career development and advancement opportunities. This problem was exacerbated by the requirements of the Foreign Service Act and the need to rotate returning Foreign Service Officers into positions utilizing supervisory and managerial skills gained in previous Washington and field assignments. The perception was aggravated by the fact that Foreign Service employees represent less than one-third of the total FAS workforce.

Civil Service employees were becoming increasingly vocal about the adverse impact of the foreign service system on their opportunities for advancement beyond the GM-13 level. Concern about the severe imbalance in career advancement opportunities for Civil Service employees was evident in various meetings of the PAC. These concerns culminated in a PAC decision in 1985 to designate certain positions that would be filled by Civil Service employees. This was a step that partially clarified career opportunities available to Civil Service employees. But continued concerns expressed by the Civil Service workforce showed clearly that these limited designations were not sufficient to meet their career advancement expectations, particularly in view of a steadily increasing workload resulting from the 1985 farm bill.

Employee concerns continued throughout 1986 and 1987 and were reinforced in a 1988 class complaint of discrimination by black employees. Identification of these concerns was further elaborated upon during an agency specific supervisory/managerial training program in 1988/89 attended by all supervisors, managers, executives and non-supervisory employees at GM-13 and above.

In order to address employee concerns in a systematic fashion, the Administrator, in consultation with his top management staff, established the Committee on Civil Service and Foreign Service Personnel Management Issues. The composition of the Committee was designed to be representative of Civil Service and Foreign Service employees throughout FAS, including representation of the EEO Advisory Committee and the Professional Career Development Program (JPs).

The Committee met off site at George Mason University for two weeks to review personnel policies and operations and to develop recommendations for adjustments and improvements in the dual personnel system that would address employee concerns.

After several preparatory meetings and compilation of background materials, the Committee began its work on April 3, 1989. In order to help facilitate the review process, Debra Alexander of Ben Alexander and Associates, Inc. was employed to develop a process to guide the Committee in its deliberations. The methodology adopted was a problem-solving/decision-making model. The model was designed to help the Committee systematically identify, examine and refine issues, define problem statements and conduct factfinding in order to develop their recommendations.

Resource personnel from the Personnel Division, the Department's Office of Personnel, the Departments of State and Commerce and several other sources were used to enhance understanding of the operation of the Civil Service and Foreign Service personnel systems.

M E T H O D O L O G Y

The Committee on Civil Service and Foreign Service Personnel Management Issues met in plenary session and in small groups throughout the two-week period of its work. The methodology used by the group was a problem-solving/decision-making model. The first step was to examine what is working well and what is not working well. To facilitate this process, the Committee looked at:

1. What was working well over which FAS had control.
2. What was working well over which FAS had no control.
3. What was not working well over which FAS had control.
4. What was not working well over which FAS had no control.

This process helped the group focus its efforts on "What was not working well over which FAS had control" (item 3 above). The group then listed its concerns along with the concerns raised by employees in the weeks prior to the beginning of its work. Forty-seven issues were developed (See Appendix). These issues were analyzed and grouped into ten broad problem areas. The problem areas were then further refined and restated in the form of problem statements which were re-examined in detail through a factfinding process. The factfinding process involved identifying the causes and effects of each problem. Once the problems as well as their causes and effects were agreed to, recommendations for corrective actions were developed.

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

The Committee identified five problem areas in the dual personnel system it felt were contributing to the more fundamental problem of fairness. The group believes strongly that its recommendations address the issues of fairness and that acceptance and implementation of its recommendations will help employees redirect their energies to getting the job done. The Committee developed its recommendations with the understanding that the future of FAS truly depends on "a partnership for success." But for that partnership to endure, the dual personnel system must be reasonably responsive to the career aspirations of the entire work force.

The five problem areas identified by the Committee are:

- CAREER ADVANCEMENT
- RECRUITMENT
- COMMUNICATIONS
- MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND ORIENTATION
- PERSONNEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

These problem areas are thoroughly explored in the following pages. They include the problem statement, causes and effects of the problem, and recommendations for their resolution.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Problem Statements

In the area of career advancement, we addressed the following three problems:

1. Since the establishment of the dual personnel system, most Civil Service professionals feel they do not have career advancement opportunities beyond the GM-13 level.
2. Many technical and support staff are presently dissatisfied with their current career path and opportunities.
3. There are more JP's in foreign service track jobs in Washington than can be absorbed into the foreign service.

Causes

There are three key causes to these problems, with several contributing causes.

1. Foreign Service has a clearly defined career path versus an ill-defined career path for Civil Service professionals.

A contributing cause to this key cause is the reallocation of positions from Civil Service to Foreign Service as first communicated to the work force in the 1983 memo from the Administrator to managers and supervisors (see Attachment 1). This memo explained that Civil Service program area positions as a percentage of total professional positions would be sharply reduced over time, with the greatest reductions at the GM-14 and above level which would largely be shifted to Foreign Service. The rationale for this decision involved top management's belief that the agency could be effectively managed by rotating Foreign Service Officers. The anxiety created for Civil Service workers by this memo was reinforced when, in 1985, Assistant Administrators designated how many actual positions by grade would be shifted from Civil Service to Foreign Service (See Attachment 1).

The 1983 memo stated that GM-14's in the program areas would be reduced from 40 percent of the combined GM-14/F0-2 workforce to 23 percent while F0-2's in Washington would grow from 20 percent to 31 percent. GM-15's would be reduced from 28 percent of the combined GM-15/F0-1 workers to 15 percent while F0-1's in Washington would rise from 29 percent to 35 percent. The sharpest reallocation would come in the SES ranks. Career SES positions in the program areas would drop from 21 percent of total SES/SFS positions to 7 percent.

Across all program areas, the net loss of GM-14 positions between December 1984 and January 1989 was 10 (42 positions reduced to 32). However, another 11 positions had been designated for reallocation from Civil Service status, leaving an agency total of only 20 in the program areas. For GM-15's, the net loss was only 2 percent. However, another 7 were designated for reallocation from Civil Service status, leaving a total of six. Career SES positions will fall to zero from the present level of 3.

A breakdown by program area is attached but the greatest reduction in GM-14 and above levels will be in Commodity and Marketing Programs (C&MP). By the time the reallocation process is complete, only 9 GM-14's would remain in C&MP, down from 17 in January 1989 and 32 in December of 1984. In addition, there would be no GM-15's or career SES positions in C&MP.

Another contributing cause to the belief that there is a lack of a Civil Service career path is that most new supervisory vacancies are filled automatically by Foreign Service Officers, while non-supervisory vacancies peak at the GM-13 level. These two developments effectively limit the professional Civil Service career path to GM-13. This ceiling is being maintained by classification practices that do not provide for systematic agency use of non-supervisory senior economist positions at the GM-14 level. OPM policies do allow for this practice if deemed desirable and justifiable by the Agency. In the past, GM-14 non-supervisory economist positions have been established as one time appointments that will lapse with the separation of the incumbent.

2. The root cause of the second problem (related to technical and support staff) can be broken down into two parts -- the real and perceived lack of opportunities for transition into the administrative and professional positions for the agency's clerical staff and the lack of higher grade, non-supervisory technical positions in the Information Systems Management Division (ISMD) for the agency's computer professionals. There are a number of contributing causes to these key causes.

A number of actions taken by top management in the last 5-7 years have contributed to the growing dissatisfaction among clerical staff. Included were:

- A. The decision 5-6 years ago to abolish statistical clerk/assistant positions in C&MP. This decision still affects the outlook of the remaining statistical assistants as to their long-term career prospects in FAS.
- B. The decision to bring in JP's that met the foreign service recruitment profile to perform tasks that were previously performed by clerical staff in addition to standard professional tasks.

These decisions, combined with the perception that FAS Management is too rigid relating to position classification practices (i.e. higher grade structure) and upward mobility opportunities and procedures, have contributed to a serious decline of staff morale and negatively affects overall agency performance.

FAS lacks positions for higher graded (GM-13/14), non-supervisory computer professionals. Throughout the federal government, there is a problem in recruitment and retention of computer professionals due to the considerable pay discrepancy with the private sector. However, a number of professionals from ISMD have left in recent years to take higher level, non-supervisory positions in other federal agencies. As is the case with non-supervisory GM-14 economists, this cause can be attributed to position classification practices in FAS.

3. The third problem is the result of the Agency's recruiting strategy, which applied a foreign service-oriented recruiting profile to candidates for Washington-based program positions.

Effects

The effects these problems have had and will have in the future are:

1. Potential loss of institutional knowledge and continuity as turnover increases due to Foreign Service Officers replacing Civil Service employees. There are two aspects to this effect. First, as Civil Service employees perceive they have little career advancement opportunities beyond the GM-13 level, they are likely to become discouraged and leave the Agency. While this has not been a major problem yet, it is believed that it could become one over time as Civil Service career frustrations mount. Even if only small numbers actually do leave the Agency, it is believed they will be among the best and brightest, draining the Civil Service of its most productive assets.

The second aspect is related to the effects that frequent rotations have on a division's institutional knowledge and continuity. Many divisions are responsible for performing complex functions and operating programs that require knowledgeable and well-trained individuals. Frequent rotations imply a large portion of time is spent training before the next rotation. At that point, the division's training process starts all over with the replacement Foreign Service Officer.

2. Lower employee morale as evidenced by EEO complaints, widespread negative comments about the organization and strained working relationships. This effect is a consequence of both problems. Given the amount and intensity of complaints and negative comments that surfaced in the collection of employee input for this review as well as the recent EEO survey, low morale will continue until resolution of both problems.
3. Lower productivity as FAS focuses time and energies away from the Agency's mission and toward the personal concerns of its workers. This is a tangible result from low morale and can be partially measured by the time lost in working towards mission fulfillment by all GM-13's and above (and equivalent Foreign Service Officers) being sent to the Ben Alexander and Associates one week management training course as well as this Committee's two-week process and the related time spent by employees documenting their dissatisfaction for the Committee's use. In addition, productivity suffers when JP's spend time performing traditional clerical functions (i.e. data entry, photocopying, delivering memos, etc.).
4. Serious threat to FAS' family culture and a decline in worker commitment to fulfilling the Agency's mission. The low morale and perception that the Agency doesn't treat the career aspirations of all its workers equally is threatening its "one-family" culture. Traditionally, this culture nurtures the desire for all workers to pull in the same direction in terms of fulfilling its mission and has been cited by some employees as a central strength of FAS. A related effect is the decline in Civil Service employee commitment -- the result of feeling abandoned by the Agency and pulling in no direction at all in terms of mission objectives.

5. Widespread disaffection among JP's hired into foreign service track jobs in the past two years. In this area, the Agency is faced with a dilemma of its own making; it has hired a number of well-qualified, ambitious foreign service aspirants at the entry level to meet its immediate program needs in Washington. It is now evident that these employees face limited annual opportunities for entry into the foreign service, which means, at the least, that they face a longer wait before lateral entry and posting than has been the case in the past. Moreover, the Agency's problem will be compounded if significant numbers of recently hired JP's choose to leave for positions elsewhere.

In addressing the problem of a lack of a Civil Service career path in the Agency, the Committee recommends that the Administrator be guided by the following principles:

- A. Program management at all levels is to be shared by Civil Service and Foreign Service personnel.
- B. The Agency needs institutional memory and continuity at all levels of management.
- C. The Agency also needs specialized expertise at the non-supervisory level in all program areas.
- D. The Agency needs to provide a regular and predictable flow of talent through the Foreign Service ranks.
- E. The Agency must fully utilize the skills of Foreign Service Officers during their Washington rotations.

In order to put these principles into practice, the following steps are recommended:

Recommendations

1. The Administrator should provide for a well-defined career path for Civil Service employees through the SES level.
2. The Administrator should establish a position management structure designating all positions as Civil Service, Foreign Service, or either/or positions.
3. This position structure should be concluded by June 15, 1989. In the interim, there should be no reduction in the number of positions currently filled by Civil Service employees.
4. To ensure a career path, the position management structure should preserve the existing number of Civil Service positions, and as necessary, establish additional Civil Service positions at every management and supervisory level, including Assistant Administrator/Deputy levels, in all program levels (except Foreign Agricultural Affairs). These positions should be GM-13/14/15 and SES. Designation and location of these positions would be up to the Administrator, with an annual review through the budget process.

5. The Administrator should retain/designate non-supervisory specialist positions at the GM-14 level (e.g., computer specialists, economists, marketing and trade specialists, etc.).
6. The Administrator should grant Limited Career Extensions to Foreign Service Officers only in exceptional cases, based on the need of the Agency for that employee's specialized skills in accomplishing the FAS mission.

In making the above recommendations, the Committee recognizes that it will take several years to accomplish a more balanced Civil Service/Foreign Service structure in the Agency.

7. The agency should identify at least five professional positions (at the GS- 9/11 levels), aiming for at least one per program area, into which employees in the technical/clerical occupations can be "bridged" via the career enhancement program (formerly the upward mobility program). As part of this effort, supervisors participating in the program should receive counseling on their responsibilities to assure that employee's "KSA's" are developed fully in accordance with planned goals.
8. Agency managers/supervisors should be encouraged to make maximum use of the personnel mechanisms already in place for "bridging" clerical and technical employees into administrative and professional occupations.
9. The agency has a number of highly specialized job series (e.g. travel and transportation specialist, logistical coordinator, logistical management specialist) where the pool of qualified candidates is typically small. The committee believes it would be to the agency's advantage, and would increase the ease with which these positions could be filled, to train and develop the talents of people already within FAS so they could compete for these jobs. This would result in the retention of historical knowledge as well as provide career enhancement opportunities to the technical and clerical employees.
10. Establish a mentor program for the agency's secretaries which will match experienced FAS secretaries in the upper grades of that occupational series with new hires into the organization. We believe such a program would be of substantial benefit to the new hires, and would help build esprit de corps and a sense of professionalism among the agency's secretarial staff. Further we recommend some brief training for those who serve as mentors to assist them in filling their role to the fullest.
11. The "FAS Career Planning Guide" (see Attachment 2) and other materials that describe the linking of clerical and technical jobs into logical sequence where skills and abilities in these job may be credited in total, or in part, to jobs in the administrative and professional occupations, should be updated and distributed to all employees.

12. FAS should use to the fullest extent such personnel assignment options as details and job exchanges in order to enrich the professional skills of its Civil Service/Foreign Service staff and strengthen the agency's ability to expand exports. In support of this idea, the Committee recommends the establishment of a small working group composed of both Foreign Service and Civil Service employees to explore possibilities for some creative assignment options for FAS personnel and report on their feasibility to the PAC by January 2, 1990. Examples of such assignment options include details/exchanges to the Hill, to other USDA and U.S. Government agencies (such as USTR), to regional export organizations or cooperator groups, to State departments of agriculture, senior seminar, etc. The task force would especially like to see the agency establish an ongoing International Agriculturalist on Campus program with a university, which would support the goal of developing course curricula which would provide greater knowledge about international agricultural marketing and enhance the agency's recruitment effort.
13. Disavow the Recruitment Policy Announcement published in the FAS Weekly Bulletin on November 3, 1976 (see Attachment 3) and develop a new policy statement which indicates that it is permissible for all employees within FAS to move laterally throughout the organization and that the agency is no longer precluded from assisting such moves.

There is a "bulge" of JP's in FAS/W who aspire to a foreign service career but who face an increasingly competitive lateral entry process. To eliminate some of the uncertainty associated with the foreign service career path, we make the following two recommendations:

14. The Personnel Division should explore ways to allow foreign service aspirants to convert at the GM-13 level. We understand that Sec. 307 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 limits assignments to a salary level of class 4 or lower.
15. Foreign Agricultural Affairs and the Personnel Division should present JP's with the facts about entry level hiring goals, anticipated attrition in the foreign service, and lateral entry targets for coming years so they can make informed career decisions. In this connection, JP's have a particular need for a clear statement of the agency's policy and goals for Limited Career Extensions in the Foreign Service.

It also should be noted that some JP's caught in the bulge will be beneficiaries of the Civil Service career path recommendations and of the recruiting strategy recommendations.

In addition to these specific recommendations, the Committee discussed ways of making the lateral entry process more objective, especially the role of the Qualifications Review and Evaluations Panel, but concluded that this issue was outside its mandate.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Foreign
Agricultural
Service

Washington, D.C.
20250

OCT 14 1983

TO: Associate Administrators
Assistant Administrators
Legislative Assistant
Planning and Analysis Staff
Division Directors
Branch Chiefs
Agricultural Attache Offices
Agricultural Trade Offices

FROM: Richard A. Smith
Administrator

SUBJECT: The FAS Personnel System

In 1981, the Secretary of Agriculture was given authority to use the provisions of the Foreign Service Act to establish a foreign service personnel system in the Foreign Agricultural Service. Plans were made for the new system and its first members were appointed in the summer of 1981.

The plans to establish a foreign service personnel system in FAS included a number of objectives to guide management of the overall FAS personnel system for the future. The first objective was to create a staff of generalists, appointed to foreign service positions, who would be dedicated to careers abroad, who would be available for worldwide assignments, and who would fill almost all of FAS' needs for people to staff its overseas posts. The assumption was that this foreign service staff would consist of about 200⁺ professionals and a grade structure that was based mainly on the grade levels of established overseas positions.

A second objective was to create a staff consisting of people who would be mainly specialists--economists in program divisions--based in Washington for most of their careers. These people would hold Civil Service appointments and occupy the balance of the program professional positions, about 125 in all. The grade structure would be designed to offer successful careers to those who choose to follow this path.

These objectives have guided management of the FAS personnel system for the past two years and they will continue to guide its management in the future. A total of 152 professionals were converted to the foreign service system when it was first established and 19 professionals have been appointed as a result of three competitive examinations. An additional 24 candidates are now ready for appointment when they are assigned to overseas positions.

Full achievement of the FAS personnel system's objectives will require a number of additional short- and long-term actions. In the short-term, we will continue to strongly encourage qualified people to enter the FAS Foreign Service. Our need for people to staff overseas posts is based on the

assumption that about 50 percent of a person's career will be spent abroad. A complementary grade structure is needed to support the rotation of people between Washington and the field and to attract qualified people to the overseas service.

To meet the increased need for foreign service personnel, we will provide one last opportunity for Civil Service people at GM-15 through GM-13 to apply for the Foreign Service. This announcement will be made in 1984. We will be looking for highly qualified candidates who are willing to make a commitment to a Foreign Service career.

The main long-term action required is to finish establishing the grade structure for the overall FAS personnel system. The following table shows a comparison of the percentage of people at each grade level now in both systems:

PRESENT GRADE STRUCTURE
(percent)

<u>GRADE LEVEL</u>	<u>CS/FS TOTAL</u>	<u>CIVIL SERVICE</u>			<u>FOREIGN SERVICE</u>		
		<u>Admin.*</u>	<u>Prog.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>OS</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>Total</u>
SES SFS	100	10	21	31	41	28	69
15 1	100	10	28	38	33	29	62
14 2	100	12	40	52	28	20	48
13 3	100	22	48	70	24	6	30
12 4	100	29	56	85	11	4	15

Again, the future grade structure of the FAS personnel system is dictated by the grade levels of positions located abroad, the assumption that about 50 percent of a person's career will be spent abroad, and the need for enough people at each grade level to fill overseas posts. The future grade structure, as approved by the PAC for both systems, is shown by the percentage of people at each grade level in the following table:

FUTURE GRADE STRUCTURE
(percent)

<u>GRADE LEVEL</u>	<u>CS/FS TOTAL</u>	<u>CIVIL SERVICE</u>			<u>FOREIGN SERVICE</u>		
		<u>Admin*</u>	<u>Prog.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>OS</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>Total</u>
SES SFS	100	14	7	21	48	31	79
15 1	100	14	15	29	36	35	71
14 2	100	15	23	38	31	31	62
13 3	100	24	43	67	17	16	33
12 4	100	21	65	86	7	7	14

* Includes the Administrator, Associate Administrators, Legislative Staff, Information Division, Data Systems Division, Export Sales Reporting Division, and Management Divisions.

Since almost all of the GM-14/15 and FS-1/2 positions are currently filled, full adjustment to the future grade structure will take place very gradually with the speed depending on the rate of attrition at GM-14/15.

The percentage of positions at each grade level in both systems and the main differences between the present and future grade structures are shown in the following table:

GRADE STRUCTURES (percent)										
GRADE LEVEL	CS/FS TOTAL	CIVIL SERVICE						FOREIGN SERVICE		
		ADMIN.	PROGRAM		TOTAL		OS	W	TOTAL	
			NOW*	NEW	NOW*	NEW				
SES SFS	7	6	5	2	5	3	14	9	12	
15 1	17	13	11	8	12	10	23	24	23	
14 2	33	27	29	23	28	25	41	43	42	
13 3	28	37	32	37	34	37	18	20	19	
12 4	<u>15</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

The highlights of all three tables presented in this memorandum are:

1. The total FAS grade structure will remain about the same.
2. The highest percentage of senior-level positions will be in the Senior Foreign Service. This has been true in the past as well.
3. The future need for people at GM-15 and FS-1 will remain about the same as now.
4. The need for additional people at FS-2 will increase. Most overseas posts call for people at grade FS-2.
5. The advancement opportunity for movement from FS-3 to FS-2 will increase; from FS-2 to FS-1 it will decrease; from GM-13 to GM-14 it will decrease; and from GM-14 to GM-15 it will remain about the same as now.

The future FAS personnel system will continue to offer one of the best career opportunities in Government. People now in either the Civil Service or Foreign Service systems will continue to have an excellent opportunity to advance and to serve in either Washington or overseas assignments. The conversion will necessarily be a gradual process. We plan to carry it out in the most positive way possible.

* Computed on basis of authorized positions in current structure.

ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions were used to determine that on the average foreign service careers should be split 50/50 between Washington and the field and that the total number of Foreign Service Officers on-board should therefore be about twice the number of authorized professional positions overseas.

1. Average career is 30 years, considering time it takes to get masters degree and average retirement age at State of 57.6 years. Our candidates would come in at age 25 to 27 and go out at 55 to 57.
2. Average FS career is 28 years. That's about 2 years before first overseas assignment and 28 in FS for a total of 30.
3. If minimum time abroad or in Washington is 2 years then minimum abroad in a career is 6 years and maximum is 26.
4. If average time abroad ranged from 12 to 16 years out of 28, or 43 to 57%, consisting of 3 or 4 tours abroad, the size of FS would range from 174 to 230. See table below.

	<u>YEARS ABROAD</u>	<u>YEARS ABROAD AS % OF 28</u>	<u>SIZE OF FS 99/%</u>
	6	21	471
	8	29	341
	10	36	275
Reasonable	12	43	230
Average	14	50	198
Range	16	57	174
	18	64	155
	20	71	139
	22	79	125
	24	86	115
	26	93	106

5. The mid-point of the reasonable range, i.e., 14 years and 50% seems closest to previous experience and our current expectations.
6. The average career profile would be as follows:

<u>AGE</u>	<u>ENTER GRADE</u>
27	4
28	3
33	2
45	1
52	SFS
55	RETIRE

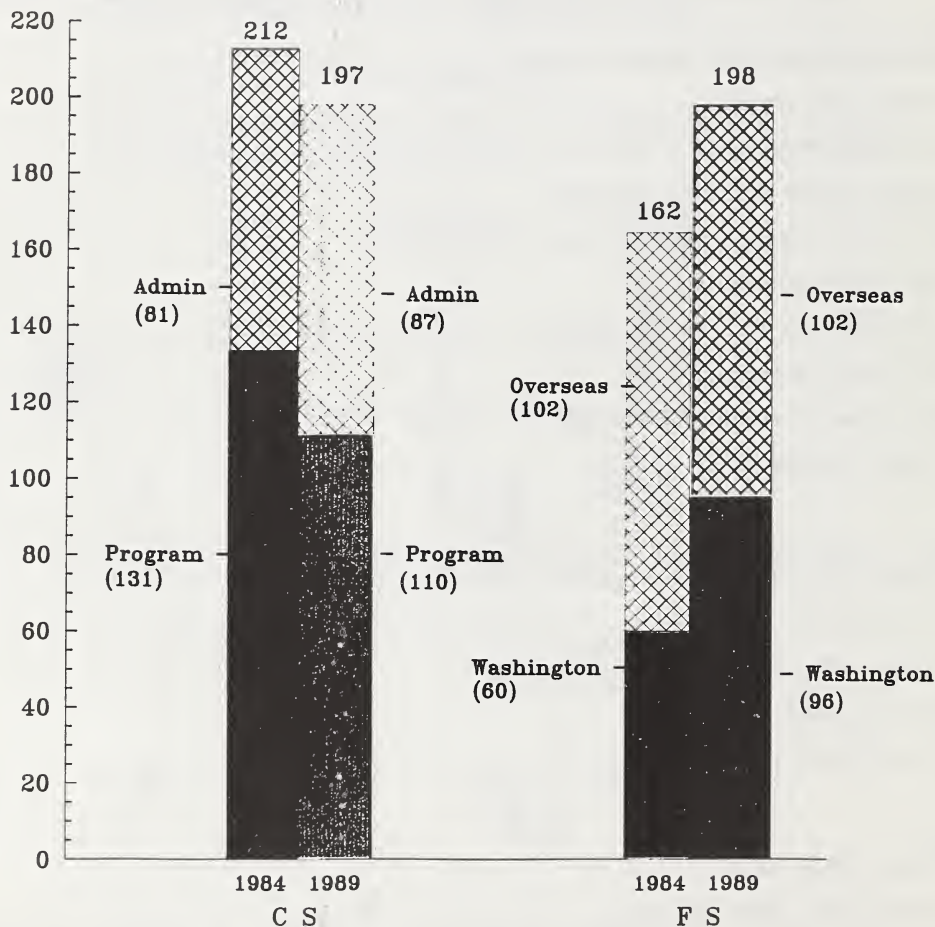
DESIGNATED CIVIL SERVICE POSITIONS

		Designated Positions	On Board	
			12/84	1/89
CMP				
Chief, Program Development Branch, EPD, GM-14				
Grain Quality Specialist, OAA				
Supervisory Agricultural Economist, Analysis, GM-14				
(Up to one in each commodity division)				
Subtotal	GM-14	9	22	17
	GM-15	0	5	2
	SES	0	4	2
EC				
Deputy Assistant Administrator, GM-15/SES				
Director, PDD, GM-15				
Area Manager, PDD, GM-14				
Director, Credit Ops. Division, GM-15				
Chief, Sales Branch, Credit Ops., GM-14				
Chief, Barter EEP, GM-14				
Chief, Commodity Ops., PL 480, GM-14				
Chief, Vessel Approval, GM-14				
Chief, Planning and Funding Br., GM-14				
Director, Program Analysis, GM-15				
Subtotal	GM-14	6	11	10
	GM-15	3	5	5
	SES	1	0	0
IAS				
Director, TEID, GM-15				
One Branch Chief, TEID, GM-14				
Director, FPED, GM-15				
One Branch Chief, FPED, GM-14				
Soviet Analyst, GM-14				
Subtotal	GM-14	3	4	3
	GM-15	2	3	2
	SES	0	1	0
ITP				
Director, PPAD, GM-15				
2 Branch Chiefs, PPAD, GM-14				
Subtotal	GM-14	2	5	2
	GM-15	1	2	4
	SES	0	0	0
Total	GM-14	20	42	32
	GM-15	6	15	13
	SES	1	5	2

Distribution of Professionals (GS-12 & Above) Between CS & FS Personnel Systems

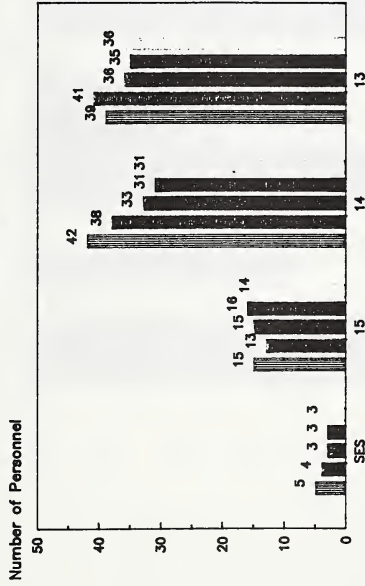
- 1984 VS. 1989 -

#Employees

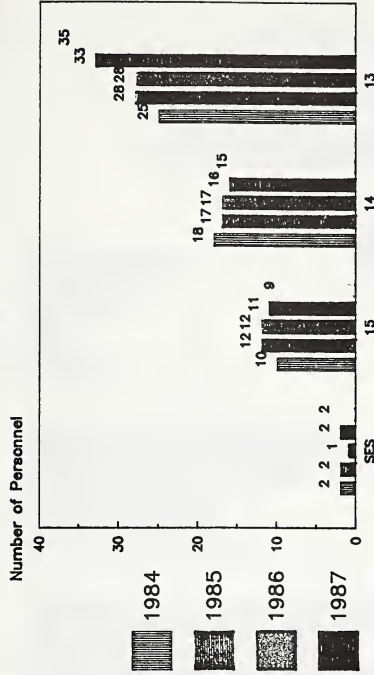


SUMMARY OF STAFFING LEVELS AT YEAR END 1984 - 1988

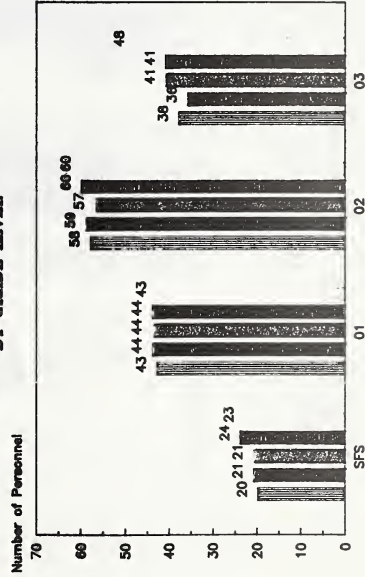
CIVIL SERVICE STAFFING BY GRADE LEVEL BY PROGRAM



CIVIL SERVICE STAFFING BY GRADE LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE

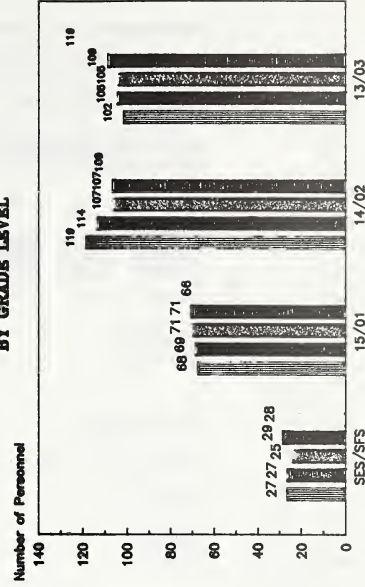


FOREIGN SERVICE STAFFING BY GRADE LEVEL

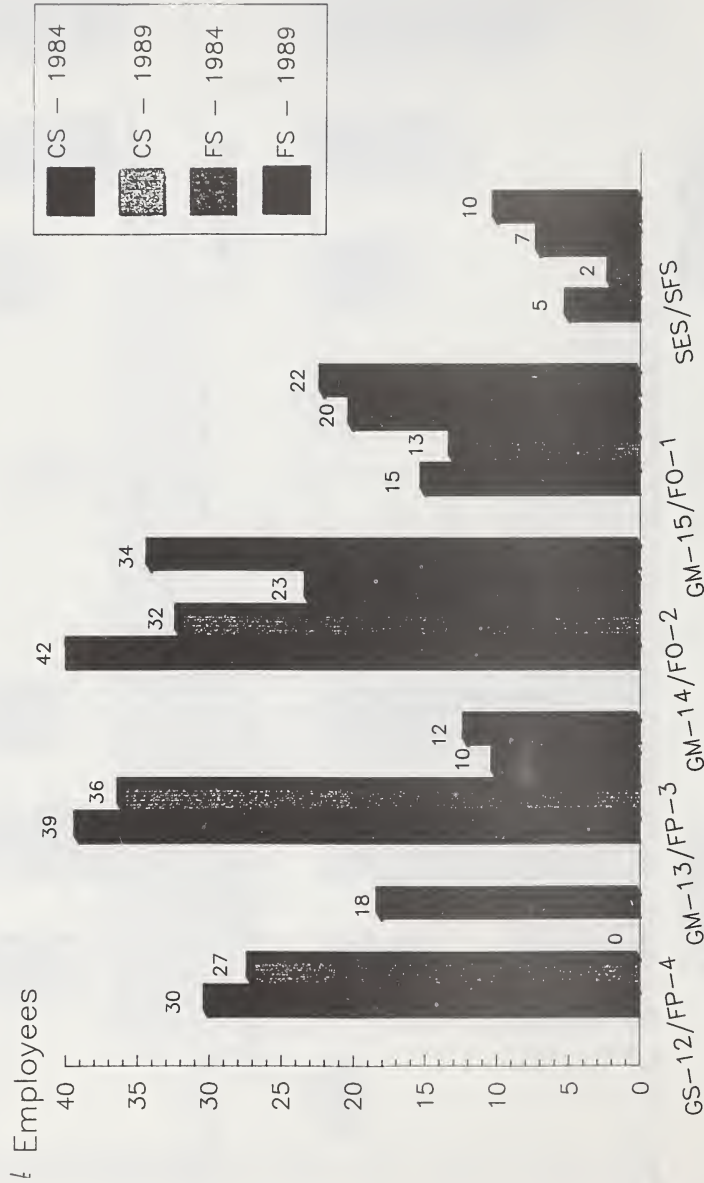


1988

CS/FS BY GRADE LEVEL

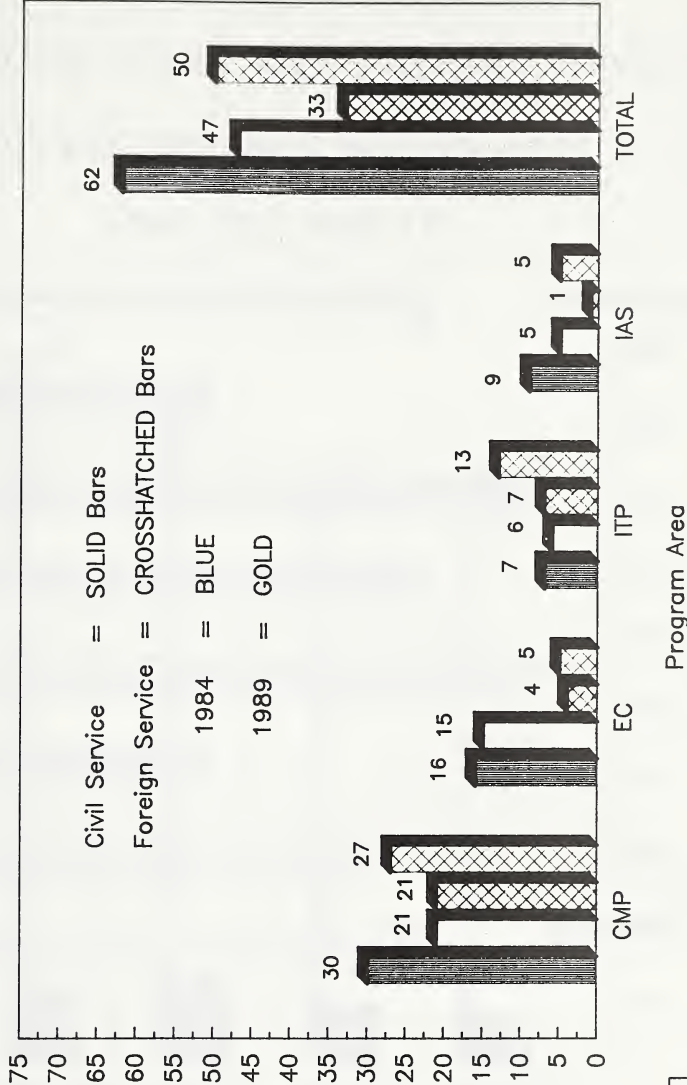


Comparison of Grade Distribution in Washington Between CS & FS (Excludes Admin) - 1984 vs. 1989 -



COMPARISON OF GM-14 AND ABOVE STAFFING BY PROGRAM AREA

Number of Personnel

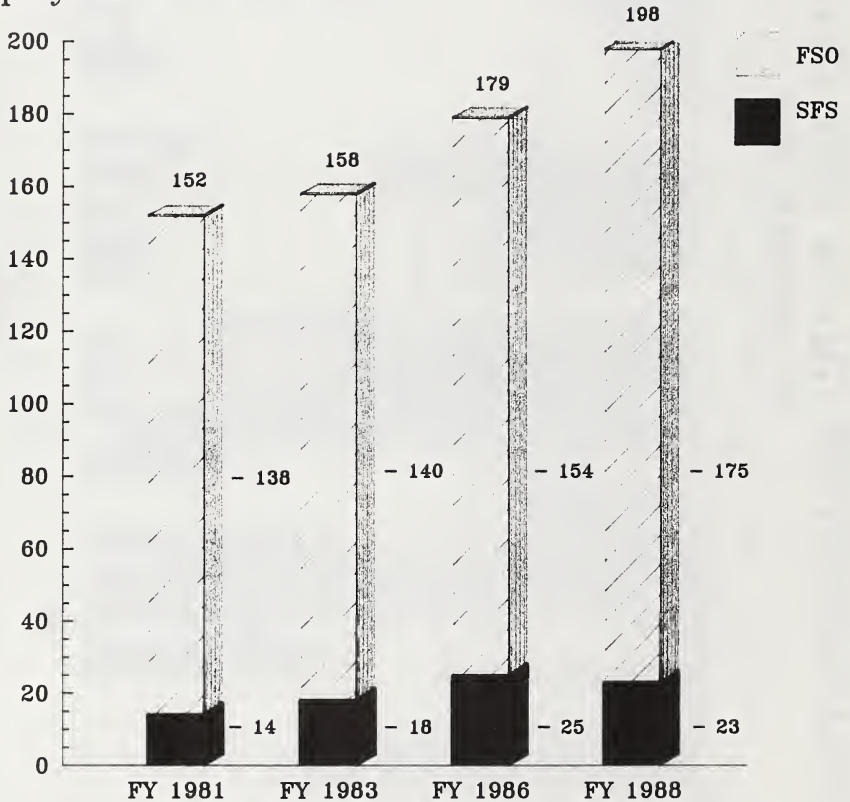


DISK-6
GM14STAFF
3/15/89
FL:GM14ST1

Size of the Foreign Service

FY 1981 - FY 1988

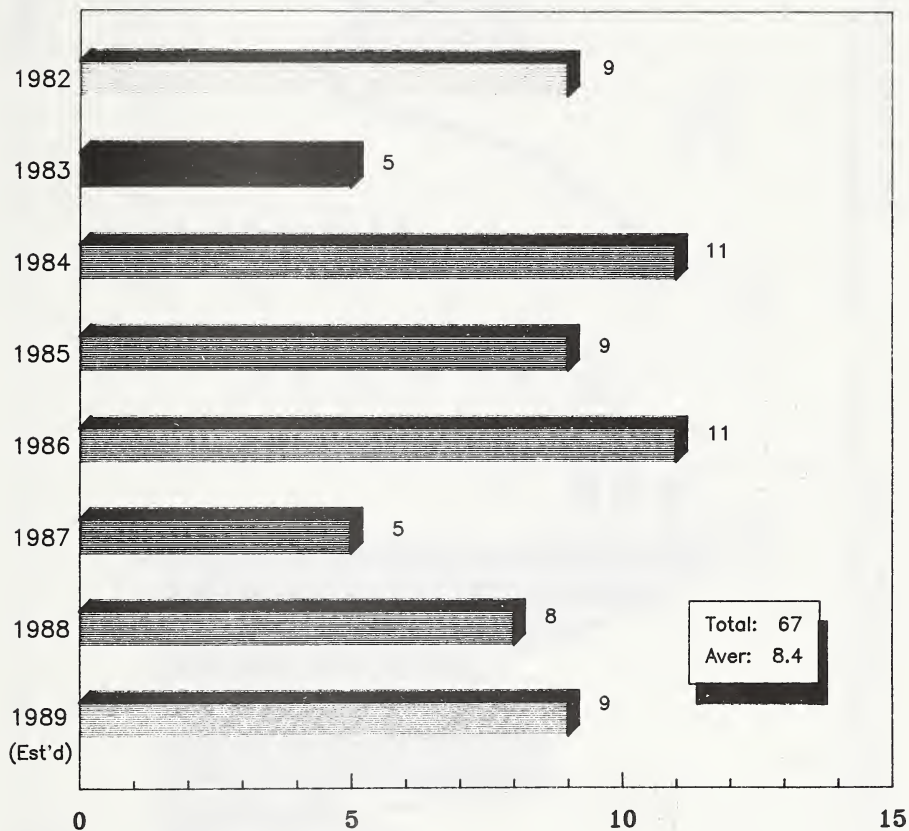
Employees



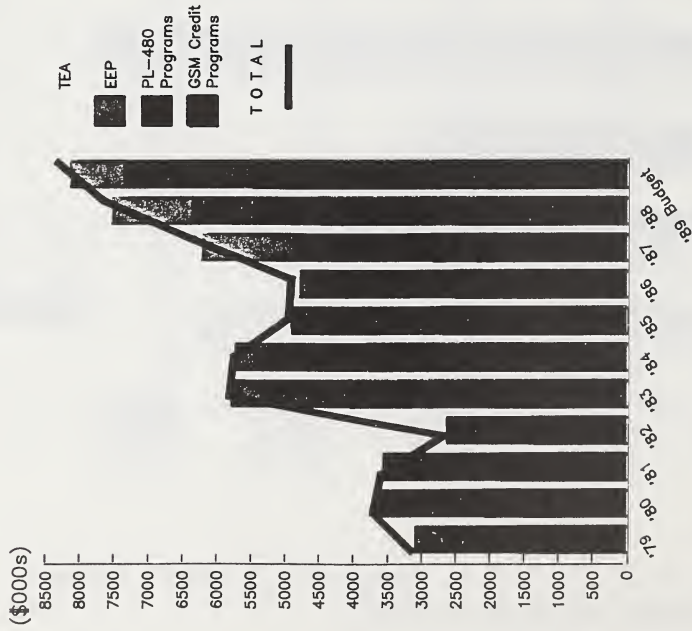
SPECIAL1: FSSIZE.CHT: 03/15/89

Attrition from the Foreign Service

- FY 1982 - FY 1989 -

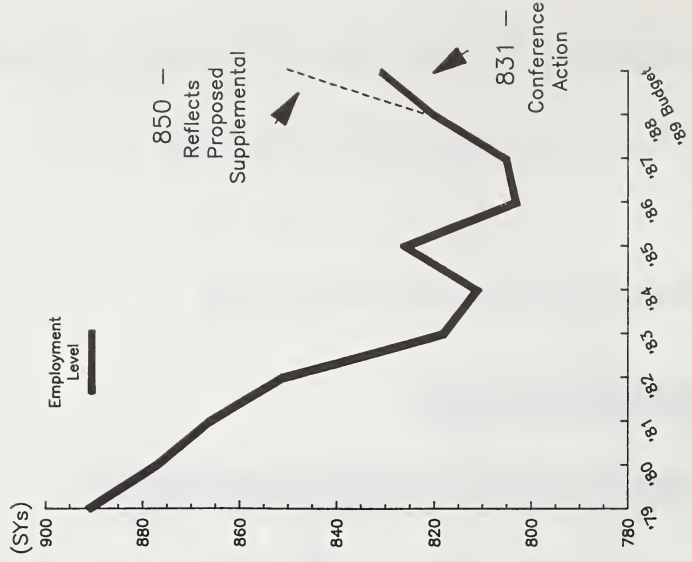


USDA Export Programs Level Has More Than Doubled Since FY 1979



EXPRGTOT.DRW
EXPRGLEV.DRW
EMPLYLEV.DRW
11/02/88

FAS Employment Level Has Declined by 7% Since FY 1979



PROGRAM1: PRGVSEMP.DRW



CAREER PLANNING GUIDE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE

Introduction

These career planning guides are intended to familiarize employees and supervisors with the variety of jobs and advancement opportunities available in FAS. They cover those FAS positions where the greatest variety of career opportunities exist. Positions limited to one or two of a kind are not specifically covered, but where they exist, such positions may be compared with the career planning guide for Program Assistant, GS-301-4/7.

The career ladders contained herein represent a linking of jobs into a logical sequence where certain skills and abilities in one job may be credited in total, or in part, to the next job on the ladder. Similarly training and experience requirements are outlined in terms of the demands of the job.

Career ladders to fit all situations are a virtual impossibility. Thus much of the potential value in these guides depends upon imaginative application and extension of the ideas and suggestions they attempt to portray.

FAS is committed to making available to all employees training consistent with requirements of the Government Employees Training Act and the availability of funds. FAS will provide, or finance through government and non-government institutions, basic skills training (grammar skills, composition, English usage, and typing) and other job related training necessary to meet organizational objectives. Normally, FAS sponsored, advanced, or specialized training presumes an existing or projected need requiring the newly acquired skills and abilities.

An employee must demonstrate by his performance in his present job and through self-development activities his willingness and ability to perform more difficult and responsible duties.

The career ladders represent most of the occupational fields and specialties in FAS. They show how employees may progress, through developmental activities, from clerical jobs to technical or para-professional jobs, and from technical and para-professional jobs to professional jobs.

Progression from one job to another within an occupation may follow either competitive or non-competitive selection procedures. Progression from one occupation to another will normally follow competitive procedures.

These avenues of upward mobility are, in effect, blue-prints which should prove helpful to supervisors and employees in employee guidance and counseling, design of training curricula and course selection, and development of individually tailored career plans. In addition, familiarity with the possibilities represented by these ladders should stimulate employees to seek training and self-improvement opportunities enabling them to advance in their careers and increase their contributions to the work of FAS.

Use of Career Planning Guides

The career planning guides include information on: Job Outline and Level of Responsibility, Skills and Abilities Needed to do the Job, Training and Experience Needed to Qualify for Position, and Method of Selection to Fill Position. They don't spell out in detail the aspects of each job at each grade level, but rather cover the typical grade span one might expect to follow in the various positions within a career ladder.

Typically, an employee's upward mobility will follow a particular career field or ladder. Under certain circumstances, however, movement to a position in a different ladder may be considered. This might occur, for example, when an employee exhibits a skill or potential that cannot be realized in his present job or career ladder. Examples of such alternative positions are given for the jobs in each ladder. For example, locating the career ladder for Economist on the chart on page 5, we see that a GS-5 Statistical Assistant has one or more alternatives including Management Assistant. Using the same chart, this position can be located and the skills, training, experience, and selection method readily determined.

The relationship between the career ladder job and the alternative position(s) is not necessarily reciprocal. In the above example, a Management Assistant would probably be neither inclined nor qualified for an economist position. Checking the Management Analyst ladder, we see that a Statistical Assistant is not listed as an alternative for Management Assistant. Additionally, individual performance and aptitude vary and not all employees in a career field would necessarily be interested in or suited for the alternative jobs.

The alternative positions recognize that many jobs provide the opportunity to develop skills and abilities to perform effectively, immediately or with certain additional training in more than one career field. The issue is not so much the type of job(s) which the employee held and for how long, but rather what was learned that is appropriate and transferable to the new job. Movement to an alternative position will often occur under a training agreement. Selection in such instances will follow competitive procedures.

The higher an employee progresses in a career ladder, the more difficult it is to move between career ladders; but, facilitating movement between career ladders is not the principal objective of the guides. The basic aim is upward mobility and this will occur most frequently within a career field.

In the event lateral movement to an alternative position is found to be necessary it will be made at the lowest grade range of any particular step in a ladder. For example, in a departure from the Management Analyst ladder an employee who is currently classified as a Management Assistant, GS-344-5, may transfer to any of the specified alternative positions at a grade no higher than GS-4. An exception to this requirement may be made when the quality and quantity of the employee's training and experience more than qualifies him for the alternative position at his current grade, or at a lower grade which is higher than the lowest rate for the step in the ladder.

Training courses contained in the guides are intended to be illustrative. Occasionally, attendance at a specified course may be essential but in the majority of cases the needed skills and knowledge can be obtained through on-the-job training or any one of several courses in a general subject area. In some career fields, college level training in specific courses becomes mandatory as an employee advances up the career ladder.

The information concerning duties, skills, experience, abilities, and training provides only a brief outline about a particular job or career field. The employee can and should benefit from discussion with his supervisor and the personnel staff. The X-118 Qualification Standards Handbook and the Position Classification Standards are logical references for amplification of the information here. Training, experience, skills requirements, testing and selection devices need not be interpreted rigidly.

A detail can often serve as a means of gaining the experience or a portion of the experience needed in a job.

In such instances, the detail will be effected through competitive procedures. At the end of the detail, the employee may be permanently assigned based on performance.

A major purpose of the guides is to provide an illustrative framework which employees and supervisors can explore and develop supplemental career plans tailored to the individual. They should serve as a vehicle for periodic employee-supervisor dialogue and face-to-face counseling. Information on the number and frequency of vacancies, the nature and extent of competition, and the long range forecast in an occupational area can be obtained from the Personnel Division. This data is subject to periodic fluctuation and more importantly it must be assessed in terms of individual employee capacity, special skills and aspirations. The evaluative process points up the importance of employee/supervisor consultation.

Subsequent advancement to grades beyond those listed in the career ladders will be based on the employee's ability and willingness to assume or undertake more difficult duties and responsibilities consistent with management needs.

ALTERNATIVES

CAREER LADDERS

	COMPR AIDE, GS-335	ACCTS MNCE CLK, GS-525	PERS CLK-TYPG, GS-203	STATCL CLK, GS-1531	PERS ASST, GS-203	STATCL ASST, GS-1531	PROG ASST, GS-301	MGMT TECHCN, GS-344	COMPR TECHCN, GS-335	MGMT ANAL, GS-345	PERS MGMT SPECTST GS-343	AGRL MKTG SPECTST GS-110	ECONMST GS-110
A	Accounting Technician, GS-525-4/7 Accounts Maints Clerk, GS-525-2/3 Clerk-Typist, GS-322-2/4												
B	Agrl Mktg Spectat, GS-1146-5/9 Program Analyst, GS-345-5/9 Program Assistant, GS-301-4/7 Clerk-Typist, GS-322-2/4												
C	Computer Programmer, GS-334-5/9 Computer Technician, GS-335-4/7 Computer Aide, GS-335-2/4												
D	Economist, GS-110-5/9 Statistical Asst., GS-1531-4/7 Statistical Clk (typg), GS-1531-3/4												
E	Management Analyst, GS-343-5/3 Management Assistant, GS-344-4/7 Clerk-Typist, GS-322-2/4												
F	Personnel Mgmt Spec. GS-201-5/9 Personnel Asst., GS-203-4/7 Personnel Clerk (typg), GS-203-3/5 Clerk-Typist, GS-322-2/4												
G	Secretary, GS-318-4/7 Clerk-Steno, GS-312-3/5 Clerk-Typist, GS-322-2/4												

Job Outline and Level of Responsibility	Skills and Abilities Needed to do the Job	Training and Experience Needed to Qualify for Position	Method of Selection to Fill Position
<p><u>Clerk-Typist, GS-322-2/4</u></p> <p>Performs general clerical and typing duties. Maintains files and records, assembles and distributes mail, answers telephone and visitor inquiries, and types a variety of rough draft material. Extracts narrative, statistical and other data, makes tabulations, briefs and reports, composes simple form and routine transmittal letters, and posts data to books and records. Works under general supervision. Work is reviewed for accuracy, coverage and compliance with general instructions and office procedures. Determines priority of work and format of materials compiled and typed, unless otherwise instructed.</p>	<p>Good typing ability and knowledge of office and filing procedures. Ability to shift immediately from one assignment to another. Familiarity with FAS and USDA organization. Ability to answer routine telephone and visitor inquiries, and ability to perform general clerical tasks.</p>	<p>High School, business, commercial, CSC, or agency typing training. High school or equivalent education and office experience desirable.</p>	<p>Clerk-Typist Examination and/or demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>
<p><u>Accounts Maintenance Clerk, GS-325-2/3</u></p> <p>Performs a variety of clerical work related to the maintenance of agency accounting records. Maintains and posts to various ledgers. Prepares internal reports on the status of appropriations including obligations, expenditures and balances. Reconciles a variety of accounts receivable and disbursements. Recommends new or revised accounts maintenance operations. Work is checked from time-to-time for compliance with instructions, procedures, and maintenance operations.</p>	<p>Ability to develop a good knowledge of accounting clerical methods and procedures. Ability to operate calculator and other accounting machines. Knowledge of regulations and procedures governing accounting operations. Ability to deal effectively with others in resolving accounts maintenance problems or irregularities.</p>	<p>High school or business school training. On-the-job training and course in elementary book-keeping. Comparable experience in related occupation helpful.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>
<p><u>Accounting Technician, GS-325-4/7</u></p> <p>Analyzes and reconciles various ledger accounts. Classifies accounting transactions. Prepares journal vouchers, and prepares scheduled and special reports to reflect status of accounting operations. Recommends methods and procedures for converting accounting activities to machine application. Reconciles unliquidated obligations within various accounts.</p>	<p>Knowledge of double-entry accrual accounting techniques and procedures, must have good knowledge of government accounting regulations and procedures. Ability to analyze computer generated reports and determine accuracy of and/or reconcile recorded transactions.</p>	<p>Experience as an accounts maintenance clerk including on-the-job training in all phases of agency accounting operations. College courses in accounting related subjects. Courses in government accounting operations and ADP are desirable.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>

Job Outline and Level of Responsibility	Skills and Abilities Needed to do the Job	Training and Experience Needed to Qualify for Position	Method of Selection to fill Position
<p><u>Clerk Typist, GS-322-2/4</u></p> <p>Performs general clerical and typing duties. Maintains files and records, assembles and distributes mail, answers telephone and visitor inquiries, and types a variety of rough draft material. Extracts narrative, statistical and other data, makes tabulations, briefs and reports, composes simple form and routine transmittal letters, and posts data to books and records. Works under general supervision. Work is reviewed for accuracy, coverage and compliance with general instructions and office procedures. Determines priority of work and format of materials compiled and typed, unless otherwise instructed.</p>	<p>Good typing ability and knowledge of office and filing procedures. Ability to shift immediately from one assignment to another. Familiarity with FAS and USDA organization, ability to answer routine telephone and visitor inquiries, and ability to perform general clerical tasks.</p>	<p>High school, business, commercial, CSC, or agency typing training. High school or equivalent education and office experience desirable.</p>	<p>Clerk-Typist Examination and/or demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>
<p><u>Program Assistant, GS-301-4/7</u></p> <p>Performs a variety of administrative and technical tasks in support of programs assigned to the office. Examines documents for compliance with established regulations. Maintains records and controls including statistical and narrative data of program operations. Makes preliminary analysis of changes, deviations or errors in data. Interprets technical requirement and identifies inter-relationships of various data. Reviews reports, publications, correspondence and related materials for conformance to established policies and procedures. Extracts and compiles data from a variety of sources. Establishes and maintains records systems, prepares cost estimates, and recommends new operating procedures. Prepares letters, cables and related correspondence. Constructs charts, graphs, tables and other material to depict the status, progress or needs of the program. Work is reviewed generally for technical accuracy and adequacy in terms of objectives desired.</p>	<p>Knowledge of agency regulations and procedures governing the program. Good judgment and ability to deal with others. Ability to interpret and identify inter-related or conflicting data as these affect the overall program or project. Ability to write reports and summarize data. Ability to extract and compile statistical data. Ability to acquire a good working knowledge of the nature and purpose of the programs of the office.</p>	<p>Experience in clerical and technical aspects of similar or related work. Training in the examination of personnel, budgetary and fiscal records. Community or business college training including courses such as math, records control, report writing, and related subjects are desirable.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>

<u>Job Outline and Level of Responsibility</u>	<u>Skills and Abilities Needed to do the Job</u>	<u>Training and Experience Needed to Qualify for Position</u>	<u>Method of Selection to Fill Position</u>
<p>Program Analyst, GS-345-5/9</p> <p>Studies and analyzes new and ongoing programs and develops new or revised operating regulations, procedures and instructions. Develops and tests effectiveness of records systems, controls and operating procedures. Analyzes and solves procedural problems arising in the operation of the programs. Analyzes and evaluates program documents, reports and correspondence, and recommends improvements to meet operating needs. Advises on uniform methods and procedures for documenting program activities. Work is reviewed for adequacy, soundness of conclusions and recommendations, and compliance with basic instructions.</p>	<p>Ability to analyze and evaluate effectiveness of program operations. Knowledge of basic analytic methods and principles. Ability to write clear, concise reports. Ability to develop information from a variety of sources. Knowledge of the capabilities of ADP equipment. Ability to develop a good knowledge of program operating policies and procedures.</p>	<p>Experience as a management technician, program assistant, or in related administrative/professional work. Training in analytic and fact-finding techniques. Classroom training in social sciences and ADP. College training and/or degree desirable.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>
<p>Agricultural Marketing Specialist, GS-1146-5/9</p> <p>Examines statistical and narrative data, reports, and other material. Makes preliminary analysis of market situations and trends. Drafts cooperator program agreements. Participates in assigned phases of broad marketing studies. Composes correspondence and completes statistical and other data as needed. Prepares report covering market development activities. Travels domestically and abroad as necessary. Work is reviewed for technical adequacy, accuracy and compliance with regulations, procedures and policies. Supervisor is available for consultation, advice and guidance on problems.</p>	<p>Knowledge of marketing methods, techniques, theories and practices. Ability to compile, analyze and evaluate data and draw preliminary conclusions. Ability to write clear, concise reports. Knowledge of the specialized marketing programs of the office. Ability to communicate effectively with others in the field and related areas.</p>	<p>Experience in administrative and technical aspect of similar or related work requiring analytic and evaluative skills. Community or business college training including courses such as math, market analysis and report writing. College degree desirable.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>

<u>Job Outline and Level of Responsibility</u>	<u>Skills and Abilities Needed to do the Job</u>	<u>Training and Experience Needed to Qualify for Position</u>	<u>Method of Selection to Fill Position</u>
<p>Computer Aide, GS-335-2/4</p> <p>Performs a variety of routine tasks relating to the technical documentation and control of computer program systems. Codes data for testing and production, checks data in source documents, drafts flow charts, and receives and distributes output documents. Maintains tape library and related computer records. Supervisor provides assistance on difficult tasks. Work is subject to review for compliance with instructions and established work procedures.</p>	<p>Ability to interpret written and verbal instructions involving machine processing. Knowledge of machine operations, capabilities, uses, work flow, data collection procedures and distribution of machine output.</p>	<p>Training in basic data processing and machine operation. Business or community college training desirable.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>
<p>Computer Technician, GS-335-4/7</p> <p>Performs a variety of technical tasks in support of computer program systems. Prepares machine processing schedules and instructions, checks on progress of work, researches problem situations, and develops improved work methods and procedures, as needed. Works with program offices in the processing of machine runs and on the solution of processing problems. Receives verbal or written instructions from programmers and analysts. Work is reviewed for adherence to schedules, quality of work produced, and effectiveness of operations.</p>	<p>Ability to meet and deal with program officials, programmers, operators, and systems analysts. Must be able to read program flow charts and instructions, and ability to prepare processing schedules. Knowledge of capabilities, characteristics, and design of computers and related processing equipment.</p>	<p>Experience as a computer aide and/or community or business college training including courses such as computer math, data processing, and related subjects.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>
<p>Computer Programmer, GS-334-5/9</p> <p>Studies work to be automated for feasibility of application to ADP. Develops and writes computer programs, including preparation of block diagrams and flow charts for translation into detailed machine and operator instructions. Codes, de-bugs, and documents programs. Guidelines include trade magazines, textbooks, equipment manufacturer's reference manuals and agency procedures. Assignments are well designed and work is reviewed for technical adequacy.</p>	<p>Ability to write computer programs, de-bug, and document machine processes. Good knowledge of subject matter to be automated. Ability to interpret and apply new programming techniques. Good knowledge of on-going computer programs and ability to work closely with others.</p>	<p>Cobol programming course, experience which has demonstrated ability to analyze and organize work, and/or college training. Courses or workshops in computer systems technology and operations are desirable.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>

<u>Job Outline and Level of Responsibility</u>	<u>Skills and Abilities Needed to do the Job</u>	<u>Training and Experience Needed to Qualify for Position</u>	<u>Method of Selection to Fill Position</u>
<p><u>Statistical Clerk (Typing), GS-1531-3/4</u> Seaches for and copies data, compiles tables, charts, reports and graphs. checks current figures with previous reports, changes data from foreign terms to comparable U.S. measures and equivalents. Types from rough drafts, correspondence, reports and statistical charts for publication. Maintains correspondence and statistical files. Supervision consists of specific guidance and instructions, either through direct supervisory control or by the use of manuals and other specific guides in written form. Completed work is checked for accuracy of individual figures and mathematical calculations.</p> <p><u>Statistical Assistant, GS-1531-4/7</u> Develops, compiles and maintains statistical series, develops tables and reports, compiles varied data on trade, production, consumption, competition and prices, and develops related explanatory material. Assignments may involve development of full details of a statistical study according to objectives and specifications, assuring consistency in approach, treatment and presentation, making adjustments where necessary and estimates where data are missing or incomplete. Supervision consists of a verbal or written outline of an assignment and the desired objectives without specific instructions as to the form, content, or procedures to be followed. Completed work is given general review for compliance with general instructions, established procedures, attainment of objectives, and appropriateness of format in the presentation of statistical material.</p>	<p>Knowledge of basic statistical methods and techniques. Ability to identify relationships between statistical items and to recognize what constitutes reasonable figures and comparable items. Ability to follow written and verbal instruction. Knowledge of foreign terms and units of measure. Knowledge of the subject matter area associated with statistical data. Ability to operate the calculator, adding machine and typewriter. Ability to learn a limited body of instructions, procedures and repetitive operations. Ability to recognize standard statistical terms and whether data is listed by country, commodity, or other grouping.</p> <p>Good working knowledge of subject matter field including specialized terminology, technicalities of commodities and pertinent foreign language terms, statistical methods, techniques and procedures, and sources of information. Ability to prepare narrative statements highlighting facts to supplement detailed tabular data. Good knowledge and understanding of the use and value of adapting statistical data to electronic equipment. Ability to use sound judgment in selecting sources of material, determining the best method of presenting facts and figures, and obtaining the cooperation of other people. Ability to research primary and secondary sources and to recognize frequent changes in the format of data obtained from various source documents.</p>	<p>High School training, instruction or experience in the use of office machines. Training and instruction in basic statistical methods and techniques and/or experience as a statistical aide, budget or accounting clerk, keypunch operator, or clerk.</p> <p>High School education, including two years in mathematics courses or equivalent experience. Formal instruction in the use of office machines or proficiency through on the job training. Experience as a statistical clerk or mathematical aide very desirable. Courses in statistical methods and techniques also helpful.</p>	<p>Clerical examination and/or demonstrated ability and performance evaluation. Completion of a Statistical Clerk training course may also be used as a factor.</p> <p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>

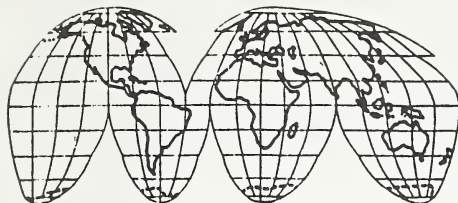
Job Outline and Level of Responsibility	Skills and Abilities Needed to do the Job	Training and Experience Needed to Qualify for Position	Method of Selection to Fill Position
<p>Economist, GS-110-5/9</p> <p>Conducts limited studies and analyses of the operating aspect of international trade and trade policies including tariffs, trade barriers, trade liberalization, preferential trade arrangements and bilateral and multilateral trade agreements. Evaluates statistical and economic data relative to supply, demand and prices, and develops and prepares economic statements, reports and supporting memoranda for use in overall analyses, articles and reports. Conducts research and prepares special economic reports and statistical analyses. Completed work may be used in publications. Composes correspondence and compiles statistical and other data in reply to request for information. Is expected to continue the learning process toward greater personal proficiency in economic analysis. Is accountable for accuracy in following complex instructions and for developing initiative in following procedures without guidance.</p>	<p>Ability to perform moderately difficult and responsible work in economics involving a fundamental knowledge of accepted methods and techniques, such as ability to analyze, evaluate and recognize supply, demand and price relationships, and ability to assimilate and use technical trade procedures, terms and interpretations. Ability to compile and arrange economic information from a variety of sources, making preliminary analysis according to instructions. Ability to understand the economic subject matter and its importance to the overall objectives of the agency. Ability to express findings and recommendations clearly in oral and written form.</p>	<p>Education in the field of economics at an accredited college or university leading to an undergraduate degree including minimum of 21 semester hours of economics and 3 semester hours of statistics or equivalent, and/or experience in the use of descriptive, expository, and statistical information and experience in the preparation of interpretative and analytical reports which will require only general editing and professional review. (Refer to CSC Handbook X-118 for more detailed information concerning training and experience needed for economist positions).</p>	<p>Appropriate CSC examination and/or in-service placement and demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>

<u>Job Outline and Level of Responsibility</u>	<u>Skills and Abilities Needed to do the Job</u>	<u>Training and Experience Needed to Qualify for Position</u>	<u>Method of Selection to Fill Position</u>
<p>Clerk-Typist, GS-322-2/4</p> <p>Performs general clerical and typing duties. Maintains files and records, assembles and distributes mail, answers telephone and visitor inquiries, and types a variety of rough draft material. Extracts narrative, statistical and other data, makes tabulations, briefs and reports, composes simple form and routine transmittal letters, and posts data to books and records. Works under general supervision. Work is reviewed for accuracy, coverage and compliance with general instructions and office procedures. Determines priority of work and format of materials compiled and typed, unless otherwise instructed.</p>	<p>Good typing ability and knowledge of office and filing procedures. Ability to shift immediately from one assignment to another. Familiarity with FAS and USDA organization, ability to answer routine telephone and visitor inquiries, and ability to perform general clerical tasks.</p>	<p>High school, business, commercial, CSC, or agency typing training. High school or equivalent education and office experience desirable.</p>	<p>Clerk-Typist Examination and/or demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>
<p>Management Assistant, GS-344-4/7</p> <p>Designs forms and conducts forms flow studies. Conducts work flow studies and collects and compiles data. Prepares exhibit material. Develops systems for indexing and controlling file material and the issuance and distribution of regulations and related material. Assists management analysts in conduct of organizational, work measurement, productivity, and other management studies. Guidelines are regulations, policies and procedures. Follows established work procedures. Work is reviewed for adequacy, soundness of judgment and compliance with management policies.</p>	<p>Knowledge of management practices and techniques. Ability to extract and work accurately with management data. Must be able to work independently and in cooperation with others. Ability to compose memoranda, narrative reports, and summaries.</p>	<p>On-the-job clerical experience. Training and/or experience requiring application of procedures, extracting data from written documents, and preparing summary reports. Also useful are courses in form and guide letters and forms analysis and design.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>
<p>Management Analyst, GS-343-5/9</p> <p>Conducts organizational, work measurement, work flows, and procedural studies and surveys. Conducts special studies for top management. Advises on the delegation, distribution, and assignment of responsibilities, management systems and control techniques. Conducts management improvement program. Work is reviewed for adequacy, soundness of judgment, and compliance with general policies. Recommendations are based upon well-established and accepted management theories, practices, techniques and precedents.</p>	<p>Knowledge of basic management principles and agency and USDA management regulations and policies. Ability to write clear, concise reports. Ability to develop information through effective interview techniques. Knowledge of ADP techniques. Ability to meet and deal with others throughout this agency.</p>	<p>Experience as a management assistant or in related administrative/professional work. Training in audit techniques on-the-job. Formal training in the social sciences and ADP. College training and/or degree desirable. Courses in correspondence control, records management, forms analysis and control, and design and use of management information systems.</p>	<p>Written test and/or demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>

<u>Job Outline and Level of Responsibility</u>	<u>Skills and Abilities Needed to do the Job</u>	<u>Training and Experience Needed to Qualify for Position</u>	<u>Method of Selection to Fill Position</u>
<p><u>Clerk-Typist, GS-322-2/4</u></p> <p>Performs general clerical and typing duties. Maintains files and records, assembles and distributes mail, answers telephone and visitor inquiries, and types a variety of rough draft material. Extracts narrative, statistical and other data, makes tabulations, briefs and reports, composes simple form and routine transmittal letters, and posts data to books and records. Works under general supervision. Work is reviewed for accuracy, coverage and compliance with general instructions and office procedures. Determines priority of work and format of materials compiled and typed, unless otherwise instructed.</p>	<p>Good typing and knowledge of office and filing procedures. Ability to shift from one assignment to another. Familiarity with FAS and USDA organization, ability to answer routine telephone and visitor inquiries, and ability to perform general clerical tasks.</p>	<p>High school, business, commercial, CSC, or agency typing training. High school or equivalent education and office experience desirable.</p>	<p>Clerk-Typist examination and/or demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>
<p><u>Personnel Clerk (Typing), GS-203-3/5</u></p> <p>Processes and types official personnel actions. Prepares controls and maintains follow up on performance ratings, medical clearances, foreign language testing, conflict of interest and security clearances. Prepares and types routine correspondence, biographic sketches, and requests for employment records. Answers a variety of questions on personnel matters for employees and other agencies and offices of the Department.</p>	<p>Knowledge of personnel rules, regulations, policies and procedures of FAS, NRC, USDA and CSC. Ability to type neatly and accurately. Skills in interpersonal relations. Sound judgment and ability to learn and accept new responsibility.</p>	<p>Business or community college training and/or responsible personnel work at a lower grade. Courses in verbal and communication skills. Course in Introduction to Personnel Management desirable.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>
<p><u>Personnel Assistant, GS-203-5/7</u></p> <p>Conducts pre-employment interviews, prepares requests for certificates, reviews correspondence. Negotiates employee transfer dates. Maintains agency merit promotion plan and records system. Provides technical assistance to personnel management specialists and explains merit promotion, classification, training, or awards program to employees. Prepares certificates, promotion rosters, and processes personnel actions. Assignments may be confined to one of the four major areas of specialization.</p>	<p>Good knowledge of guidance applicable to assignments characteristic of personnel specialist work such as classification and qualification standards, rating or training schedules, merit promotion or disciplinary policies and procedures, and personnel reports preparation. Good knowledge about the needs of the organization served, the organizational environment, and its structure and occupational composition. Requires good judgment, tact and diplomacy under conditions of pressure, stress, or emotional involvement.</p>	<p>Experience in the personnel field, preferably in an operating office. College or business school training or business school training desirable. Course in Introduction to Personnel Management, Classification, Training or Staffing and Placement, and English and Report Writing desirable.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>

<u>Job Outline and Level of Responsibility</u>	<u>Skills and Abilities Needed to do the Job</u>	<u>Training and Experience Needed to Qualify for Position</u>	<u>Method of Selection to Fill Position</u>
<p>Personnel Management Specialist, GS-201-5/9</p> <p>Assists in the administration of recruitment, reassignment and promotion of employees.</p> <p>Involved in employee relations activity such as exit interviews, counseling and grievance handling, and provides managers and employees advice on a variety of personnel matters.</p> <p>Assignments may involve classification and pay responsibility or project and program work in training, incentive awards, personnel management evaluation, or regulations and procedures development.</p>	<p>Ability to write, prepare memoranda, letters, staff reports, and regulations.</p> <p>Skill in dealing with personnel and job-related employee problems. Good knowledge of personnel policies and regulations and ability to interpret and apply them to personnel situations and problems. Familiarity with employment and placement, classification and merit promotion procedures, training needs, grievance procedures and counseling techniques. Ability to compile, analyze and report on personnel management data and information.</p>	<p>Experience in one or more areas of personnel. Courses in the public and/or personnel management fields. College level training and/or degree desirable.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluation. Written test may also be used as one factor in selection process.</p>

<u>Job Outline and Level of Responsibility</u>	<u>Skills and Abilities Needed to do the Job</u>	<u>Training and Experience Needed to Qualify for Position</u>	<u>Method of Selection to Fill Position</u>
<p><u>Clerk-Typist, GS-322-2/4</u></p> <p>Performs general clerical and typing duties. Maintains files and records, assembles and distributes mail, answers telephone and visitor inquiries, and types a variety of rough draft material. Extracts narrative, statistical and other data, makes tabulations, briefs and reports, composes simple form and routine transmittal letters, and posts data to books and records. Works under general supervision. Work is reviewed for accuracy, coverage and compliance with general instructions and office procedures. Determines priority of work and format of materials compiled and typed, unless otherwise instructed.</p>	<p>Good typing ability and knowledge of office and filing procedures. Ability to shift immediately from one assignment to another. Familiarity with FAS and USDA organization, ability to answer routine telephone and visitor inquiries, and ability to perform general clerical tasks.</p>	<p>High school, business, commercial, CSC, or agency typing training. High school or equivalent education and office experience desirable.</p>	<p>Clerk-Typist Examination and/or demonstrated ability and performance evaluation.</p>
<p><u>Clerk-Stenographer GS-312-3/5</u></p> <p>Receives and ascertains the nature of telephone calls and visitors. Furnishes information, reports and other data according to established procedures, and refers calls and visitors depending upon nature of business. Contacts other offices and agencies as necessary. Obtains correspondence, reports, files, regulations, and other material needed by others. Takes and transcribes dictation, checks grammatical construction, punctuation, spelling, citations to regulations, reports, statistics, and types material in form most appropriate. Establishes and maintains files.</p>	<p>Similar to clerk-typist plus shorthand and transcription ability, knowledge of good secretarial practices and the organization of the agency. Ability to prepare priority correspondence and memoranda for other agencies and public and private groups.</p>	<p>Similar to clerk-typist and, in addition, experience as a clerk-typist or office assistant. Advanced training through secretarial or stenographic courses.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluations.</p>
<p><u>Secretary, GS-318-4/7</u></p> <p>Performs a wide variety of administrative, secretarial and stenographic tasks. Responsible for numerous details in all phases of the work conducted in the office such as telephone, visitors, meetings, correspondence, files, mail, and other substantive work. Develops systems for work flow, record maintenance, and prepares material for conferences and meetings. Performs major portion of tasks on own initiative and judgment. Work is reviewed for compliance with office policies and procedure.</p>	<p>Ability to organize and manage the administrative and secretarial duties of an office. Must be personable and have ability to meet and deal with people at all levels. Knowledge of the organization of the agency and lines of responsibility, and knowledge of good secretarial and office procedures, files and records maintenance. Shorthand desirable and required for most positions.</p>	<p>Experience as a clerk-typist, office assistant, or stenographer. Training courses or formal education beyond high school in office practices, letter writing, secretarial techniques, and English usage are desirable.</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability and performance evaluations.</p>



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE

BULLETIN

No. 677

November 3, 1976

FOREIGN AGRICULTURE CLUB LUNCHEON. Mr. Hyde Murray, Counsel to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives, will be the guest speaker at the November 12 meeting of the Foreign Agriculture Club. Mr. Murray is a lawyer and a graduate of the College of Agriculture of the University of Wisconsin and Georgetown Law School. He has served as a professional staff member on the House Agriculture Committee for nearly 19 years. Mr. Murray will speak about next year's farm legislation which will be of vital interest to all FAS employees. The luncheon will be held in Room 1339 from 11:30-1:00. Mr. Murray will begin his presentation at 12 sharp, so arrive early. A SPECIAL NOTE to FA Club members. Next year's slate of officers will be presented at the November 12 FA Club luncheon. In addition to the slate proposed by the nominating committee, nominations will be taken from the floor. We urge all members to attend.

PROFESSIONAL FAS RECRUITMENT POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT: Until further notice, FAS professional recruitment in the program areas will be aimed at applicants/candidates with majors in Agricultural Economics and preferably with a farm background or experience. Any exception to this must be submitted (with appropriate justification) for approval of the Deputy Administrator, Agricultural Attaches and Management. This includes requesting exceptions for those who are Agricultural Economists, but do not have the farm background/experience.

Management and data systems professionals are hired into such areas because of the Agency's need for such professionally trained personnel. For this reason and since the supply of candidates trained in Agricultural Economics appears to be sufficient for our recruiting needs, employees occupying professional positions throughout the Management, and Reports & Statistics areas will not be encouraged, nor Agency assisted, in their efforts to change over to professional positions in program areas.

The decision to publicize this policy to all FAS employees was reached in a joint discussion between Mr. Hume, Administrator, and the EEO Advisory Committee.

NEW CLASSIFICATION GUIDE FOR SUPERVISORY AND LEADER POSITIONS. The Civil Service Commission has issued a new guide for the classification of supervisory positions at GS-15 and below. Implementation, which is to be completed by June 30, 1977, will include rewriting supervisory jobs in a prescribed format and reclassifying positions in accordance with the new guide or with other appropriate non-supervisory standards. Additional information regarding the new guide is contained in a Personnel Division memorandum to Assistant Administrators and Division Directors dated October 8, 1976. Also, questions may be referred to a Personnel Management Specialist by calling X74951 or X73267.

DIRECTORY OF ACCREDITED HOME STUDY SCHOOLS 1976-1977. A brochure listing the many courses available for people who wish to increase their knowledge and skills through home study, is available from the Personnel Programs Branch, Room 5649.

RECRUITMENT

Problem Statement

- Since 1983 the recruitment of professionals at entry levels has been aimed primarily at meeting human resources needs of the Foreign Service but does not fully meet these needs nor the overall needs of FAS.

Goal:

- Recruitment process should provide qualified candidates including minorities for all FAS program areas.
- Recruitment process should provide candidates for FAS/Washington as well as Foreign Service Officers.
- Recruitment process should meet needs for non-agricultural economists skills.

Background to Causes and Effects

In 1983 FAS initiated a hiring strategy to recruit professionals who eventually would enter the Foreign Service. A hiring profile limited applications to those with an Masters Degree in Agricultural Economics and certain other characteristics related to the skills needed in the Foreign Service.

At that time the number of new recruits was more or less equal to the number of new officers required for the Foreign Service. Thus, FAS needed to recruit only candidates who were willing and able to transfer to the Foreign Service.

The Food Security Act of 1985 gave many new program responsibilities to FAS. Subsequently, FAS was authorized 50 new Washington based positions to help in handling the additional workload.

The recruitment profile and the strategy (recruit only for the Foreign Service) were reviewed, but no changes were made.

New, entry level employees were hired to fill the new positions. The number of new people hired far exceeded the number of slots opening up in the Foreign Service.

Economists recruited since 1986, were told that their chances of entering the Foreign Service were very good, when in reality, FAS needed less than one-half of the new recruits to replenish the Foreign Service. Thus, FAS now has a "bulge" of recently hired professionals. These people are needed in Washington, but they were hired on the understanding that they would be able to enter the Foreign Service.

Causes

1. Recruitment Profile: The recruitment profile adopted in 1983 has limited the consideration for employment to a relatively narrow group of candidates. Specifically, this profile is a cause of the small number of minority candidates and the insufficient marketing and managerial skills among FAS employees.
2. Recruitment Strategy: In 1986 FAS was given 50 new Washington based personnel slots in program areas. The new positions were filled with hires at the entry level. Despite PAC reviews of the recruiting strategy, no changes were made in the strategy. FAS continued to recruit from the 1983 profile for Foreign Service positions, even though less than one-half of the new hires were to fill vacancies in the Foreign Service ranks. New candidates were not told that Foreign Service slots were available for only one-half or less of them.
3. Misinformed Recruiters: Recruiters, including personnel specialists and Recruitment Committee members, are inadequately briefed on FAS personnel policies and procedures. As a result, two types of misinformation have been given to FAS recruits: a) They were given unrealistic expectations on their chances for entering the Foreign Services; and b) some of the information provided on promotions, step increases, etc. was inaccurate.

Effects

1. Insufficient racial, ethnic and gender diversity in the FAS work force. FAS loses by not being able to draw upon the varied backgrounds and experiences of the full range of America's cultural heritage. Although FAS has been successful in recruiting large numbers of professional women, women are still under represented in the higher echelons of FAS.
2. A preponderance of task-oriented managers. Many FAS managers pay insufficient attention to people relationships.
3. Limited marketing, sales and promotion skills of many FAS professionals.
4. Widespread disaffection in JP ranks. This could lead to a loss of valuable employees whose skills are needed in FAS.

5. The number of JP's wanting to enter the Foreign Service far exceeds the number of Foreign Service slots available. This will require difficult management decisions in the near future because FAS has a commitment to these men and women who were hired with the understanding that Foreign Service positions were available for most of them.

Recommendations

We recognize the ongoing efforts of the FAS Recruitment Committee to analyze current recruiting problems and to develop recommendations in that area. Our recommendations seek to complement that activity.

Our committee makes two basic assumptions as a preamble to our recommendations. First, in the short-term there are going to be reduced opportunities for entry into the foreign service. This assumption reflects the composition of the current foreign service as well as the bulge of the JP's hoping to enter the foreign service. Second, there is a continuing need for persons with FAS/Washington program knowledge.

Given these assumptions, we believe that future FAS recruiting should give equal emphasis to hiring for FAS/Washington jobs. This marks a departure from current recruitment efforts, which are geared to hiring for the Foreign Service.

The committee makes six specific recommendations for change in the recruiting process:

1. Formulate Annual Strategy for Recruitment Needs.

FAS personnel needs are dynamic, with varying foreign service and program area requirements. Each year the FAS Recruitment Committee should work with the Assistant Administrator for Management to analyze the agency's personnel needs for the year(s) ahead and to develop recruitment objectives to meet those specific needs. A report, with specific recruiting recommendations, would be presented to the PAC and submitted to the Administrator for approval. This would provide the guidelines for the coming year's recruitment efforts.

2. Recruitment Criteria Should be Broadened.

The committee reached the same conclusion that was evidenced very clearly by the agency survey recently completed by FAS/Washington division directors and post heads. To quote from the survey's summary:

"...the overwhelming majority of division directors and overseas office heads indicated that not having a masters degree or a degree in agricultural economics should not preclude entry into FAS. Many cited other university degrees that would benefit the varied needs of FAS, such as degrees in business, marketing, management, and international relations. Most indicated that the current hiring policy tends to limit the pool of acceptable candidates and that this is counterproductive. Many commented that FAS/W is producing clones of one another and that emphasis on overseas experience and a desire for a foreign service career should be downplayed."

The committee feels that FAS recruitment should continue to focus upon agricultural economics for the core group of new hires and to keep the 21-hour economics requirement for all candidates. A masters degree still is desirable, but it is not a requirement. In addition, however, the agency should begin to accept superior applicants from other disciplines, such as those listed below (in no particular order of preference):

- Business Administration
- Economics
- International Relations
- Marketing

The agency should look particularly for those candidates with backgrounds in international trade and/or marketing and for those with foreign language skills.

3. Restructure the FAS Recruitment Committee.

The FAS Recruitment Committee is performing a valuable service to the agency and should be retained. In keeping with the assumptions of the preamble, however, the Committee has several recommendations for the Recruitment Committee.

The FAS Recruitment Committee should be restructured so as to represent both Foreign Service and Civil Service employees. An efficient way to accomplish this end would be to broaden the committee to include 2 members from each program area, one Foreign Service and one Civil Service. Only one member from each program area would interview any individual candidate, with FAS/Personnel assuring a Civil Service/Foreign Service mix of interviewers.

Inasmuch as the committee would now be recruiting for all program needs we recommend that the chair of the committee be rotated annually among program representatives.

Finally, we reiterate that FAS/Personnel's role on the committee is an advisory/service capacity, providing all such materials as may be requested by the committee. In this context, we recommend that all future SF-171's not forwarded to the committee for voting nonetheless be presented to the committee for information, along with covering notes as to why the individual applicants were screened out.

4. Change Certain Recruitment Methods/Processes.

The first recommendation in this area concerns reduced expectations. All professional applicants for FAS employment need to understand that entry into the Foreign Service has become increasingly competitive, with a reduced number of lateral entry opportunities and a substantial "bulge" of FAS professionals already on board who wish to lateral. Also, applicants need to understand that Foreign Service promotions have become increasingly competitive. As a result, new hires should understand that, if they should desire a foreign service career, their Foreign Service acceptance/assignment may take several years and they need not begin lobbying for FAS/Washington rotation six months after they are hired.

FAS recruiters increasingly should seek to identify human relations and management skills in the applicants for FAS. While the latter skills may not be readily apparent in the resumes of the younger college graduates, we all have learned from the recent Ben Alexander and Associates course that it is possible to use interview techniques to construct situations in which the applicant's tendencies toward people and management skills can be examined.

All FAS recruiters, particularly those in the expanded FAS Recruitment Committee which we envision, should receive additional professional training in interviewing techniques as well as orientation in the FAS responsibilities and program activities.

Finally, the process by which applicants are approved for hiring and placed in FAS/Washington divisions should be expedited. Recruitment Committee votes on an applicant should be tabulated quickly and committee approval should be sufficient for FAS/Personnel to proceed with an employment offer (subject to normal reference checks, etc.). We endorse the current system whereby the applicant may choose his/her area of employment if more than one division has made a bid, and we assume that the FAS recruiters with positions to offer have followed ethical recruiting practices.

5. Outreach

The broadened criteria should provide access to a larger pool of minority applicants. This opportunity can be magnified if FAS communicates its mission and hiring needs to students while they still have time to tailor their course work to accommodate FAS needs. Accordingly, we recommend that FAS increase its efforts to send FAS recruiters, principally Recruitment Committee members, to 1890 schools to explain the FAS mission and the broadened recruitment criteria to interested students at the sophomore and junior levels.

6. Facilitating Name-Selects

The Committee recognizes that broadening FAS recruitment criteria complicates the process of trying to reach selected individuals on the OPM registers. The hiring of non-agricultural economists and/or applicants without a masters degree will not be automatic. However, that is a small price to pay if the agency is to attain a greater professional diversity and to upgrade its people/marketing/management skills.

In this context, the Committee encourages the FAS Recruitment Committee and FAS/Personnel to work together and explore means to facilitate reaching superior non-agricultural economists on OPM registers.

7. Spouses of FAS Employees

FAS should express its willingness to consider spouses of returning Foreign Service Officers for reemployment with FAS/Washington, at least on a competitive basis. This recommendation derives from a general recognition that spouses of FAS members often possess skills that can contribute significantly to the FAS mission. In a larger sense we believe that FAS should express its willingness to consider hiring any spouse for FAS/Washington employment, on a competitive basis.

Conclusions

In developing the recruitment recommendations, the committee has sought to address what it perceives to be serious current problems in this area.

As regards the hiring of qualified minority applicants: the Committee has recommended that FAS broaden the range of disciplines being considered, hence providing a larger pool from which to recruit. Also, the Committee recommends an outreach program to explain FAS mission/needs to interested minority students so that they may better prepare themselves to be candidates for FAS.

As regards perceived agency shortcomings in marketing and management skills: we recommend recruitment of selected, superior individuals with marketing backgrounds. In addition, we recommend that FAS recruiters seek to identify applicants with demonstrable human relations and management skills.

As regards the current "bulge" of JP's seeking Foreign Service entry: we have sought recommendations that do not compound the problem. If we begin to recruit for FAS/Washington needs, a smaller percentage of new hires should aspire to Foreign Service entry. And, with the "reduced expectations" conveyed in the interview process, new hires should have fewer illusions regarding the time and competition involved before one becomes a posted Foreign Service Officer.

COMMUNICATIONS

Introduction

Most FAS employees believe a key component of the agency's difficulties in managing the dual personnel system is a widespread communications problem. This was reinforced during the Ben Alexander and Associates supervisory/managerial training course when it became obvious that there was pervasive misunderstanding of personnel matters, ranging from routine personnel rules and procedures to the broader personnel policies that affect performance evaluation and career advancement. In order for the recommendations in this report to be successfully implemented, the Committee believes that more effective communication should be established between employees and supervisors at all levels of the organization. Greater understanding of FAS personnel policies, practices, procedures, and decisions will result in smoother operations and more effective utilization of the agency's human resources.

Problem Statement

There is a communications problem in FAS in that employees do not understand the basis for the personnel policies, practices, procedures, and decisions which affect them.

The negative consequences of this communications problem are:

1. An increase in informal and formal complaints, as demonstrated by the class action suit filed in 1988.
2. More griping.
3. Lower productivity, as inferred from the fact that employees are spending time griping and searching out information instead of working.
4. A loss of credibility for management as a provider of factual information.
5. A turning to peers for information, which sometimes fills the information void with myths rather than facts.
6. And finally, a loss in management's ability to motivate employees and build esprit de corps in the organization.

The Committee identified the main causes of this communications problem within FAS to be the following:

1. Agency managers/supervisors have a non-communicative personality profile, as evidenced by the results of the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator tests administered by the Ben Alexander and Associates in 1988 and 1989.

2. Managers and supervisors lack understanding of their role as communicators of personnel programs, policies, decisions, etc., and also may lack information about those policies themselves.
3. There is confusion on the part of managers and supervisors, the Personnel Division, and the PAC about who has the responsibility for communicating PAC decisions to employees.
4. Some managers/supervisors may screen information passed on to employees based on their perceptions of what employees need to know.
5. A paper overload crowds out the time available for everyone to keep informed.
6. The more open atmosphere at the Executive level in recent years has not trickled down to the working level of FAS.
7. Employees may not be asking for the information they need. This could be because they don't know the information exists or where to find it. Alternatively, they may know where to get the information but don't trust the information source.
8. The information presented to employees may not be in a readily understandable form. It may be too technical or too complicated to be explained solely in paper form.
9. The elimination of the agency newsletter in the mid-1970's cut down on one way to communicate with employees. The letter was discontinued because of budget and staff constraints.
10. The elimination in the early 1980's of the publication of information on Civil Service promotions, reassignments, etc. Apparently, this was done at the request of Civil Service employees who wanted confidentiality.
11. An imbalance of information publicly available on Civil Service/Foreign Service personnel actions. For example, all Foreign Service information is published while the only information on the Civil Service concerns vacancy announcements. This creates the impression that promotions are concentrated in the Foreign Service.

Recommendations

1. That there be a monthly memorandum on management issues from the Administrator to all employees in order to develop a more open communication environment in the agency. This could be used as a vehicle to:

- Announce all Civil Service and Foreign Service promotions, reassignments, awards, and hirings;
- Disseminate decisions based on PAC recommendations to all FAS employees on a timely basis;
- Convey other personnel policy information; and
- Communicate agency's goals and agenda.

This action will address the imbalance that now exists wherein all Foreign Service promotions, meritorious step increases, assignments, etc., are made public via the Weekly Bulletin, while similar information for the Civil Service side is not released.

2. That there be increased emphasis given to the orientation of new employees and re-orientation of returning Foreign Service Officers with respect to a wide range of agency issues, including, but not limited to:
 - overall personnel policies, highlighting recent changes for returning Foreign Service Officers;
 - the role and function of the PAC;
 - EEO issues;
 - the dual personnel system; and
 - the Agency's mission and goals.

For newly hired persons, this should provide a broad background on personnel policies of the agency, information on the structure of FAS, and a realistic picture of the career advancement opportunities in both Civil Service and Foreign Service. The Committee recommends that a sponsor program be developed at the division level to assist in the orientation of new hires. For the returning Foreign Service Officers, the re-orientation should serve as a refresher course in EEO and FAS/Washington personnel issues, with an emphasis on what is happening on the Civil Service side in order to prepare them for FAS/Washington managerial responsibilities.

3. That the supervisory performance element and standard for managers and supervisors have specific language requiring the communication of personnel programs, policies, and decisions to employees.

This would underscore the responsibility of all managers to devote more effort to communicating personnel issues to their subordinates and would provide an effective means of persuading those managers who do not communicate well with their employees (because of personality profile or other factors) to seek training and assistance in developing communication and managerial skills. An improvement in communication of personnel practices at the supervisor/employee level should lead to a significant reduction in the information void that now exists throughout the agency.

4. That informational materials be developed to familiarize all FAS employees with the similarities and differences between the Civil Service and Foreign Service systems. This would help to correct some of the misunderstanding that exists on both sides with regard to promotion systems, benefits, performance appraisal, retirement, and overall structure. This effort could be taken a step further by conducting occasional workshops to explain various personnel policies.
5. That the Personnel Division staff give periodic presentations and participate in question and answer sessions at the division level staff meetings. This would serve to facilitate greater 2-way communication between employees and the Personnel Division, providing information and feedback on various personnel issues.

MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND ORIENTATION

Introduction

From the top management down, FAS should put high priority on managing human resources by improving the skills of its supervisors and managers. As a task-oriented agency, FAS places a high emphasis on meeting its goal of implementing mandated programs and of increasing U.S. agricultural exports. However, the efforts of achieving these goals, in a climate of expanding tasks and limited resources, has greatly affected employee relations and has had an adverse impact on the effectiveness of accomplishing the FAS mission. An improvement in managing FAS' human resources could substantially boost employee morale, bring about unity in the agency, and greatly reduce and diffuse the number of conflicts which have evolved in FAS as a result of the dual personnel system. For many years, FAS has been known as a "can do," action-oriented agency, whose employees have traditionally worked hard to carry out its mission.

Problem Statement

FAS managers are more technically focused and task-oriented than skilled in human resource management.

Effects

Not surprisingly, this problem has produced several negative effects:

1. No comprehensive, overt agency policy to develop human resource management skills.

While a management training requirement exists for supervisors and managers, and various course listings have been developed, it is largely left to the employee to take the initiative, working with his/her supervisor, to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP). Hence no overall regulations, guidelines or master plan seems to exist for agency-wide goals for human resource management, i.e., analyzing and matching total work force, efficiently and humanely, to meet program needs.

2. No formal training/re-orientation plan exists to provide Foreign Service Officers returning to supervisory/management positions training to handle management problems unique to the Washington environment.
3. Emphasis on task accomplishment has resulted in employees being reluctant to take management training.

In addition, task-oriented supervisors/managers may not have sufficient aptitude, skill or time to focus on human relations and people problems. As a result of these deficiencies, some supervisors/managers may fail to identify and fully utilize employee KSA's.

Finally, deficiencies in management of FAS' limited human resources adversely affect agency productivity and morale.

4. Not all pre-packaged supervisory/managerial training meets FAS' particular needs. (The exception to date has been the Ben Alexander & Associates recent one week seminar that focused on FAS' needs; otherwise all training has been generic.)
5. Placement of some employees into supervisory/managerial positions, primarily for career advancement purposes, without regard to their managerial aptitude.

The tabulation of FAS' managers' Myers-Briggs profiles shows a strong preponderance of introvert, judgmental employees--a pool that may lack "people skills." (See Attachment).

Causes

The Committee identified several causes of this problem, most of which, though not all, can be resolved or reduced.

1. One of the most striking developments--largely outside the control of FAS--is the significant increase in an already heavy task load. This was created by new programs mandated by Congress in the 1985 Food Security Act (Farm Bill) and the 1988 Trade Bill. However, there was no commensurate increase in the agency's human resources to implement these programs.

As recently stated by FAS Administrator Tom Kay, "Since the signing of the Farm Bill, FAS has successfully implemented or expanded 12 new export programs with basically no change in employment. In fact, over the past decade...(while) the value of (FAS administered) export programs has more than doubled, FAS employment has declined by 7 percent."

2. In the program areas, FAS rewards technical performance more than supervisory/managerial skills. Thus, FAS' recruitment policy is directed toward technical rather than people skills.
3. The narrow recruitment profile (Master's in Agricultural Economics) has served FAS well, but could favor a natural aptitude/preference interest in task accomplishment over human resource management.

This natural bias tends to be borne out by the Myers-Briggs type Indicator results for FAS supervisors/managers who participated in the recent FAS Human Resources Management seminars. One hundred and fourteen (114) FAS supervisors/managers differed, sometimes sharply, from national norms, being much more "introverted, "thinking" and "judging," and less "feeling," and perceiving." (See Attachment for tabulation, plus descriptive statements about these characteristics.)

4. Finally, in the view of the Committee, FAS has relied too greatly on the Management area to define and shape the goals, needs, and quality of the agency's management of its human resources.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends the following actions to improve management skills and employee orientation to the agency:

1. That the current training of all supervisors/managers be assessed. Within 6 months of this assessment, all supervisors found lacking training in this area be required to complete training as outlined in the Development Training Handbook required for supervisors/managers dated June 1981. The Committee also recommends that the Handbook be updated.

The required training for the supervisors and managers follows:

- A. For first level supervisors: 80 hours of Basic and Advanced Supervisory Training;
 - B. For second level supervisors (Deputy Division Directors, Division Directors and Deputy Assistant Administrators): 80 hours of Basic and Advanced Managerial Training, such as the New Managers' Training Course; and
 - C. For all entrants or current occupants of executive level positions: appropriate executive training, where necessary.
2. That all FAS/Washington second level supervisors ensure that newly selected supervisors complete the required basic and advanced supervisory training within 8 months of assuming duties.
 3. That all returning Foreign Service Officers, designated for supervisory positions be required to complete advanced supervisory training within 90 days after returning to FAS/Washington. In addition, Foreign Service Officers should be required to attend the formal re-orientation program specific to FAS;

4. That a quick reference guide to Title 3 of the FASR's be developed and distributed to each Division for supervisor and employee use;
5. That the IDP process be simplified and that supervisors' and managers' elements and standards of performance be expanded to include employee development and training;
6. That internal managerial networking workshops be conducted periodically on on-going management/supervisory issues, perhaps utilizing the case study approach; and
7. That a supervisory/managerial incentive award be established as part of the regular FAS incentive awards program.

Meyers-Briggs Profile

The Meyers-Briggs Test given to 114 FAS/W managers and supervisors help to illustrate how FAS managers and supervisors differ sharply from the national norms on each of the 4 behavioral areas, with 70 of these managers falling in the 4 corner quadrants. Some of the characteristics common to these profiles are as follows:

- "Some problems may arise from the INTJ's single-minded concentration on goals."
- "INTJ's may neglect their feeling values to the point of ignoring other people's values and feelings."
- "They (ESTJ's) tend to focus on the job, not the people behind the job."
- "They (ESTJ's) think conduct should be ruled by logic, and govern their own behavior accordingly."
- "They (ESTJ's) may encounter problems if they expect everyone to be as logical and analytical as they are."
- "They may also tend to be somewhat suspicious of imagination and intuition and not take it seriously enough."

In brief, FAS managers are demonstrably short on people skills, with a tendency to focus upon production rather than personnel problems/issues. This situation has continued unchecked for years because there was no coordinated FAS program to even identify managerial shortcomings.

Population Comparison's

	<u>Total U.S. Population</u> (%)		<u>114 Current FAS Managers</u> (%)
Introversion	25		60
Extraversion	75		40
		* * *	
Intuitive	25		39
Sensing	75		61
		* * *	
Feeling	50		19
Thinking	50		81
		* * *	
Perceiving	50		25
Judging	50		75

P E R S O N N E L A D V I S O R Y C O M M I T T E E

Problem Statement

During the past five years there has evolved a widespread misunderstanding and mistrust of the PAC decision-making process bolstered by the belief that all/most personnel policies and decisions are being made inefficiently and secretly by unrepresentative senior managers.

Causes

1. Expanded responsibilities of PAC in recent years as directed by 1986 FASR.
2. Secretive nature of PAC deliberations which are not communicated to the rank and file.
3. Composition of PAC is viewed as not representative (all but one of the Assistant Administrators are members of the Senior Foreign Service).
4. Busy schedule of PAC members exacerbated in recent years by Uruguay Round, 1985 Farm Act and the Omnibus Trade Act.
5. Some managers blame PAC instead of honestly taking responsibility for unpopular personnel decisions.
6. Insufficient information is gathered on Foreign Service Officer's preferences, skills, and abilities for consideration in the assignment process.
7. PAC implementation of Administrator's 1983 memo.
8. Returning officers are not apprised of openings in FAS/Washington and are unable to make specific preferences known.
9. Perception that subjectivity plays too much a role in placing Foreign Service Officers in the absence of a well-defined assignment structure.

Effects

1. Civil Service employees feel that their interests are underrepresented on the PAC.
2. Personnel decisions are often delayed pending PAC approval/concurrence.
3. Civil Service employees believe all General Merit personnel selections are subject to PAC approval/manipulation effectively subverting the merit promotion process.
4. Employees feel powerless to question/appeal a "PAC" decision.

5. PAC is viewed as a closed-box -- few employees understand how it operates.
6. PAC has become a focal point for much employee dissatisfaction, regardless of whether PAC is responsible or not.
7. Some Foreign Service Officers are matched poorly with job, resulting in low employee morale and diminished individual performance and lowered productivity at the organizational level.
8. Reduced Foreign Service Officer confidence in the assignment process.
9. There is a perception among Foreign Service officers that the assignment process is not working according to existing policy (3 FASR Chapter 36) and is not transparent e.g., it does not take into consideration individual specific knowledge, career specific goals, sharing of hardship posts, etc.

Recommendations

1. Need for the PAC

The Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC), consisting of the top management officials in FAS, is responsible for Agency personnel policy. There is a need for the PAC. If the PAC was formally abolished, it would continue to exist informally. If the rules under which the PAC operates are revised and codified, it can operate in an accountable manner.

The Committee recommends that the PAC reassess and define its role and responsibilities as a vehicle for recommending personnel assignments and overall personnel policy decisions to the Administrator and Associate Administrators. The FASR on the PAC should be revised as necessary.

The PAC should be an advisory committee, comprised of SES/SFS members, dealing with a limited range of personnel policies and decisions, with minutes/decisions made public.

2. Composition of the PAC

If the PAC process and its work is to be transparent and understandable, its framework and procedures must be institutionalized. Following are several suggestions which the Administrator and the members of the PAC may want to consider.

To ensure adequate preparation for PAC meetings and timely implementation of PAC decisions, the Committee recommends that the Assistant Administrator for Management be appointed permanent chairperson. The Administrator would retain the final decision making authority. It should be emphasized that the PAC does not approve or decide, the PAC advises. The Assistant Administrator for Management, as chairperson, would assume the burden of organizing PAC meetings. He/she would ensure that the opinions of all Assistant Administrators are considered, and that PAC recommendations with options are given to the Administrator and the Associate Administrators.

Membership of the PAC would be composed of the Assistant Administrators.

The Director of the Personnel Division should serve as the Secretary, but would not be a voting member.

The FAS EEO Coordinator would be an observer at all PAC meetings. The EEO Coordinator, who would not have a vote, would ensure that the proceedings adhere to EEO principles.

3. Personnel Assignment Responsibility

- A. Post Assignments: To assist in making recommendations for assignments, the Assistant Administrator for Foreign Agricultural Affairs should provide PAC members with: a) Foreign Service Officer's post preferences, b) KSA's of Foreign Service Officers and c) KSA's desirable at each post.
- B. Washington Assignments for Returning Foreign Service Officers: These assignments should be made in a more orderly and objective manner. It is proposed that:
 - a. A list of specific jobs available be announced by December 1;
 - b. Foreign Service Officers rank the available jobs in order of preference by December 31;
 - c. Assistant Administrators list their preferred candidates for the previously identified job vacancies; and
 - d. The Assistant Administrator for Management prepares the above information plus the KSA's of the Foreign Service Officers being assigned for the other members of PAC.

4. Broad Personnel Policies Affecting FAS

- A. The PAC should consider only policies that affect the overall operation of FAS (not a single program area).
- B. PAC decisions should be based on a full range of alternatives. When policy decisions are being considered, the Assistant Administrator for Management should present a position paper which describes possible options, and the impact of each option on the Civil Service and Foreign Service work forces plus the EEO implications.
- C. The PAC has no role in Civil Service promotions. Merit promotions of Civil Service employees would continue to be implemented in accordance with the FAS Merit Promotion Plan.
- D. The PAC should make a periodic review of the relationship between Civil Service and Foreign Service employees in the Agency.

5. Implementation of PAC Decisions

The Chairperson of the PAC should ensure that PAC proposals which have been accepted by the Administrator are executed within a reasonable time frame.

6. Communication of PAC Decisions

When the Administrator makes decisions based on PAC recommendations, all FAS employees should be informed of these decisions as indicated in the Communications Section of this report.

APPENDIX

WHAT IS WORKING WELL OVER WHICH FAS HAS CONTROL

1. FAS is recruiting well qualified persons.
2. More than adequate resources are available for lateral entry.
3. Working relationships are effective across organizational lines.
4. There is dedication to agency and a technically competent top management.
5. There is common interest to problem solving.
6. The JP's are given a meaningful participatory role.
7. The Foreign Service system created a better organization. (More systematic way of managing overseas workforce.) (More equal with Department of State overseas.)
8. There is a commitment to management training.
9. There is a commitment to improving language training (continuing commitment to improvement).
10. FAS has a good reputation in information/program operations.

WHAT IS WORKING WELL OVER WHICH FAS HAS NO CONTROL

1. The image of international work in FAS has high prestige, glamour--helps recruitment, retention, dedication to work.
2. Some aspect of the Foreign Service are working well.
3. The high visibility FAS receives through the 1985 Farm Bill.

WHAT IS NOT WORKING WELL OVER WHICH FAS HAS CONTROL

1. Lack of effective two-way communication.
2. Non-transparency of personnel policies, decisions and opportunities/Civil Service/Foreign Service.
3. Lack of career opportunities.
 - For Civil Service professionals
 - Bridge positions for Civil Service clerical/technical employees.

4. Lack of compatibility grade-wise for Civil Service technical, secretarial, professional employees with other Government agencies.
5. Lack of in-depth institutional knowledge.
6. Recruitment process too narrow.
 - Only for Foreign Service
 - Profile too limited
7. Recruiters not thoroughly trained and don't work from a script in line with current policy.
8. No effective orientation for:
 - New hires
 - Foreign Service returnees
 - Secretaries
9. Non-competitive selection of managers results in poor management.
10. Foreign Service performance standards not working equitably.
11. Limited opportunity for meaningful work for non-Foreign Service, JP's, leading to potential talent drain.
12. Foreign Service regulations need to be enforced in fairness to those in and coming into the system.
13. Personnel policies are inconsistent between program areas.
14. Current lateral entry system into Foreign Service could discriminate by age.
15. FAS personnel system not making effective use of such options as details for Foreign Service/Civil Service, rotations of Civil Service, sabbaticals, etc.
16. Upper level Senior Foreign Service Officers not going back overseas as desired.
17. No formal long-range planning--course correction apparatus--for FAS on personnel issues.
18. Bulge--source of frustration--JP bulge.
19. Effectiveness of supervisory mentoring for training.
20. JP rotational program needs to be systematized.
21. Inconsistent internal recruitment within divisions.
22. Identification of training resources and evaluation of quality.

23. Recruitment profile too narrow.
24. Up/out criteria liberally applied.
25. Granting of limited career extensions for Foreign Service.
26. Foreign Service rotations to Washington affects mobility of Civil Service employees.
27. In-bound Foreign Service employees placed in management jobs may lack supervisory experience/training.
28. Interpretation of classification standards.
29. Commitment to upward mobility.
30. Top management too program oriented.
31. Lack of awareness on the part of management of employee opportunities.
32. Lack of publicity of Civil Service promotions.
33. Foreign Service lateral entry process is discriminatory, does not identify most qualified.
34. Problem of over 40 age discrimination.
35. Foreign Service performance appraisals-narratives are self generated (puffed-up).
36. Perceptions that FO-2's working for Civil Service supervisors are disadvantaged.
37. Expectations for advancement unrealistic.
38. Personnel Advisory Committee/Recruitment Committee are perceived as unrepresentative/insensitive.
39. Assistant Administrator interference in Civil Service rating process.
40. Perception that Personnel Advisory Committee manipulates approval of Civil Service promotions; Foreign Service Officer assignment process.
41. Waiting period for first Foreign Service assignment too long.
42. FAS awards system does not reward true merit.
43. Civil Service applicants for job openings are not kept informed.

44. Poor skills motivation of support staff.
45. Personnel Advisory Committee gives assignments for fast track Foreign Service Officers thus enhancing promotion potential.
46. Foreign Service Officer ratings watered down.
47. Inequality of Civil Service/Foreign Service grade distribution.

WHAT IS NOT WORKING WELL OVER WHICH FAS HAS NO CONTROL

1. Retirement of Civil Service staff.
2. Job ceiling/budget constraints.
3. Rigidity of personnel classification system.
4. Private/public salary gap.
5. Civil Service image (by public).
6. Task overload.
7. Interest of minorities in the U.S. in pursuing a Master's Degree in Agricultural Economics.
8. Need for higher grade mix in Foreign Service relative to agency as a whole.
9. Two career families affecting mobility/family life.
10. Merit Pay.

Establishment of a Foreign Service
Personnel System in FAS

GENERAL:

- Foreign Service Act of 1980 authorized the establishment of a Foreign Service Personnel System in FAS.
- In 1981 the first members of the FAS Foreign Service were appointed -- a total of 152 professionals.
- On October 14, 1983 the Administrator announced a plan (copy attached) which outlined a number of personnel management objectives:
 - 1) The establishment of a Foreign Service cadre of approximately 200 professionals.
 - 2) The maintenance of a Civil Service cadre of approximately 125 program professionals (GS-12 and above). Program professionals were defined as Civil Service employees working in the traditional program areas as ITP, CMP, EC and IAS (excluding Data Systems and Export Sales Reporting).
 - 3) The realignment of the overall grade structure between Civil Service and Foreign Service personnel systems.
- In the fall of 1988 the Administrator approved a PAC recommendation to limit the number converted to Foreign Service during the 1989 lateral entry process to approximately 10. This number was based on the projected attrition of current Foreign Service officers.
- The objective of 200 professionals in the Foreign Service was achieved in December 1988.
- The number of Civil Service program professionals as of January 1989 stood at approximately 110 which was 15 below the 1983 target and 21 below the actual number on board in December 1984.
- Grade structure realignment has not yet been completed. Civil Service program positions at the grade 14 level and above have declined by 15 since December 1984.

The Foreign Service grade structure at the FO-2 level and above has increased slightly even though total FS employment has risen significantly from 152 to 200.
- A review of the minutes of the Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) revealed a number of discussions on Civil Service/Foreign Service personnel policy which follow:

FAS PERSONNEL SYSTEM:

09-30-83. Lou Davis made a presentation to the PAC. The purpose was to focus attention on our present situation and to outline a direction to follow to arrive at an improved situation 3 to 5 years in the future. The foundation of this effort is our obligation to manage a balanced system which provides good people maximum career opportunity. As a foreign affairs agency, this poses unique challenges. The PAC agreed that adjustments must be made in the personnel system as indicated in the presentation. As follow-up, an implementation plan must be developed.

04-11-84. In the operation of the personnel system in FAS, the Administrator reaffirmed the balance between Civil Service/Foreign Service positions the PAC had agreed to previously. He emphasized that the only positions not included in the normal FS rotation are specialized positions in the agency. Specifically these are ADP, Management, Export Sales Reporting, and FCCAD.

08-10-84. Nearly a year ago the Foreign Service/Civil Service position mix in FAS was approved by PAC and announced. Now it is time for a review of the balance of higher level Foreign Service/Civil Service positions in the agency.

10-22-85. The Administrator approved a further delineation of the Civil Service career structure for program professionals at the GS-14 level and above. Each Assistant Administrator indicated which positions in their program area would be "designated" primarily for Civil Service employees. The "designated" positions did not represent the maximum number that could be filled by civil service employees. (Position listing attached with comparative data for 1984 and 1989.)

ASSIGNMENT/ROTATION POLICY:

03-29-85. Placement of new hires in Commodity Divisions. The suggestion has made that we should consider a plan under which new hires in the programs (JP's) be selected by a strong recruitment committee charged with hiring candidates for entry into the Foreign Service. First assignment would be to a commodity division with a mandatory assignment elsewhere before application for the FS candidate list/assignment overseas. There was sufficient interest in the suggestion to warrant development of a proposal for later PAC consideration.

10-22-85. The initial assignment of Junior Professionals (JP's) who are recruited into the agency for Foreign Service careers was discussed. It was agreed that all new employees need commodity division experience before they go overseas. To implement this decision the plan is that new employees will spend 18 months in one area and 18 months in another before they go overseas. One of the 18 month assignments is to be in a commodity division. The Personnel Division will flag the time periods and bring the need for a rotational assignment to the PAC for review and decision.

11-19-85. The minutes of the October 22 meeting included a statement regarding initial assignments of Junior Professionals who are recruited into the agency for Foreign Service careers. "It was agreed that all new employees need commodity division experience before they go overseas. To implement this decision the plan is that new employees will spend 18 months in one area and 18 months in another before they go overseas. One of the 18 month assignments is to be in a commodity division. The Personnel Division will flag the time periods and bring the need for a rotational assignment to the PAC for review and decision." Several of the Assistant Administrators disagreed and the topic was discussed again. The conclusion was that there would not be a formal rotation program. While knowledge of the reporting system is desirable before overseas assignment, not all or only commodity divisions provide it. It was agreed that periodically the Personnel Division will speak with Assistant Administrators to bring to their attention those who have been in their first assignment 18 months. If other assignments are appropriate and can be arranged informally they will be done and PAC will be informed.

10-09-86. The list of those Junior Professionals who have been in an area for 18 months and should be reviewed for rotation to another assignment will be brought to the next PAC.

11-17-86. The mechanism for arranging rotation of Junior Professionals to a second assignment was reviewed. The Personnel Division will provide an up-to-date list of those eligible for rotation. Arrangement for rotation will be made informally, as appropriate among the program areas. Each quarter an updated list will be prepared and reviewed by the PAC.

12-21-87. The quarterly list of Junior Professionals available for second assignment was distributed. There was a brief discussion about whether a second assignment is an absolute requirement. It was agreed that although a second assignment is not an absolute requirement for all of them, it is highly desirable for those who expect to join the Foreign Service so they have a basic understanding of commodity reporting as well as the other major areas of FAS responsibility. (Note: This quarterly review process as continued to the present (3-21-89).

RECRUITMENT/HIRING POLICY:

07-07-82. (This discussion was prompted by review of the qualifications of an individual who had applied for Foreign Service lateral entry but was not ranked high enough to be referred for the examination.) Review of the individuals qualifications led to a broader discussion of our professional hiring policy, the recruitment committee's role and clerical recruitment. Our preferred recruiting source of Agricultural Economists with farm background was confirmed; the operation of the recruitment committee is to be reviewed.

06-28-84. Papers regarding FAS recruiting and hiring activities were circulated before the meeting. The Chairman of the Recruitment Committee spoke about Committee activities and the quality of the candidates we have been able to locate. In summary, the key points of the discussion which followed were:

1. We have been able to hire well qualified Agricultural Economists. These professionals are able to do our work and we see no reason to change our recruitment and hiring policies.
2. Candidates are hired for the agency with the expectation that most of them will eventually make the Foreign Service their career. Selections will continue to be made by the supervisor with a vacancy from among Recruitment Committee approved candidates.
3. We need to strengthen our skills in marketing. This can be done in several ways. We can hire people (not necessarily at the entrance level) with strong marketing skills as they relate to agribusiness; provide a training program perhaps including selected employees spending some time working in an agribusiness company; or assign several well qualified marketing people to the Export Programs (High Value Products) area who could provide coaching on marketing to the Junior Professionals. These suggestions will be pursued.

01-17-85. This issue relates to concentration of our recruitment efforts in specific schools by designated recruiters. This principle was accepted. The following schools were reviewed and approved: University of Florida, North Carolina State, North Carolina A&T, Washington State, University of Idaho, University of California/Davis, Stanford, University of Arizona, New Mexico State, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, Ohio State, Purdue, University of Kentucky, Kansas State, University of Missouri, Michigan State, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin, University of Illinois and Iowa State. It was agreed that the recruiters would recruit at the school from which they graduated, if possible and that they should be Foreign Service Officers. If PAC members have suggestions about names of schools or recruiters, they should be made to the Personnel Division for referral to the Recruitment Committee.

10-09-86. We will continue to follow the hiring model the Recruitment Committee uses in screening applicants. The Recruitment Committee has been reviewing the model and if changes are proposed, they will be brought to the PAC for approval.

LIMITED RESPONSE TO VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

02-05-82. (After reviewing several several competitive merit promotion selections at GM-13 to 15 the PAC minutes show the following). We discussed our concern about the limited response to vacancy announcements. The Personnel Division will continue to monitor the situation.

02-16-82. (After reviewing several several competitive Merit Promotion selections at GM-13 and 14 the PAC minutes show the following). In the case of the two 13's there was only one applicant for each of the two positions. For the GM-14 there were 3 applicants. The Administrator expressed his concern with the lack of applicants when positions are advertised. He asked that a meeting be called for 12's and 13's to discuss with him the reasons they do not apply for vacancies.

FILLING VACANT POSITIONS:

04-20-83. In the PAC of January 15, 1982, in connection with our discussion of overseas staffing, the FAS policy on assignments was reaffirmed. As stated in the attachment to the minutes of that meeting, "Except in unusual circumstances, selections for overseas assignments are made from among those who are Foreign Service members or candidates." This policy was discussed again at some length with a decision to reexamine the overseas assignment policy and meet again to reconsider it.

12-12-83. Options for Temporarily Filling Vacant FAS/W FO-02 and 01 Positions Pending Return from Overseas Assignment of Designated Permanent Incumbent:

- Accelerate return of overseas employee
- Have supervisor of vacant position serve in "Acting" capacity
- Have subordinates with the unit serve in "Acting" capacity on a rotating basis
 - Rotate among FS subordinates only
 - Rotate among both GM and FS subordinates
- Laterally detail GM employee (who had had or needs the experience) from outside the unit
- Detail an FS employee for outside the unit
 - FS employee currently holding permanent assignment
 - FS currently serving in position below his/her rank
 - FS above/at/below grade of vacant position
- Designate one lower-level GM employee to fill the vacant position
 - On detail
 - By temporary promotion

Considerations/variables:

- Length of temporary assignment
- Supvry/mgrl/technical demands of vacant job
 - Nature of job
 - Qualifications of other supervisors/managers in line of supervision over vacant position
- Supvry/mgrl/technical qualifications of proposed temporary selectee
- Workload demands of position from which proposed temporary selectee would be taken

07-05-84. There are some key positions in FAS/W which are vacant. People have been named to act for either short or longer periods of time. The Administrator emphasized the importance of getting these positions filled on a permanent basis as quickly as possible to maintain the stability of the organization. This may require bringing Foreign Service staff members from the field to FAS/W in an effort to fill the position with the best qualified person. A follow-up PAC will be scheduled shortly to consider candidates for these key vacancies.

08-17-88. Announcement of a GM-13 vacancy in International Agricultural Statistics was discussed. The PAC had asked to look at the balance of GM/FS positions at the 13 level on an overall basis before advertising any more Civil Service vacancies at that level. After discussion of the Civil Service vacancy left by XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX and its history in the Civil Service, it was agreed that this vacancy should be announced now.

COMPARISON

SUMMARY CIVIL SERVICE/FOREIGN SERVICE

Civil Service

Structure - Position based system which is hierarchical. Foundation in law-Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, Classification Act of 1949, etc. Decisions on how the system is managed are made by the Administrator with input as appropriate from managers, supervisors, other employees and technical support of Management, Personnel Division.

System Integrity -- OPM Oversight

Entry -- Through competitive process and Civil Service examination. For GS-9 Agricultural Economists, this is a paper review.

Career-Conditional Period -- 3 years of continuous service before conversion to Career Status. Includes a probationary period which is the first year of the 3.

Foreign Service

Structure - Rank-in-person system with concentration in the higher levels. Foundation in law - Foreign Service Act of 1980. FAS was named in the law as one of the five Foreign Affairs agencies. Decisions on how the system is managed are made by the Administrator with input as appropriate from managers, supervisors, other employees and technical support of Mgmt., Personnel Division.

System Integrity --
Congressional Oversight

Entry -- Through competitive process and lateral entry. Entry usually at the GS-11/12 equivalent.

Career-Conditional Period -- Up to 5 years of continuous service. Reviewed by Commissioning Board and must have language proficiency before commissioning as well as medical clearance of self and dependents, top secret clearance and world-wide availability. Nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Promotion -- Upon satisfactory performance may be promoted to positions in career ladder without competition. Beyond career ladder, promotions are made as the result of position vacancies for which there is competition.

Senior Executive Service -- Entered thru competitive process as positions become vacant. Six pay levels but no grades. Performance reviewed annually by USDA performance review boards. Pay level adjustments, 'bonuses', and Presidential ranks are reviewed by the boards. Presidential ranks are approved by OPM

Adverse Actions -- Taken in accordance with OPM/USDA/FAS procedures and regs. Ultimate administrative appeal is to the Merit Systems Protection Board. Action taken and then reviewed.

Retirement -- Basic 55/30, 60/20, 62/5 apply. No mandatory retirement age. CSRS and FERS.

Promotion -- Performance file reviewed every year by selection boards. Compete with peers on rank ordered lists for slots available at the next higher level.

Senior Foreign Service -- Entered after recommendation by selection boards, approval of the Administrator based on available slots, nomination by the President and confirmation by the Senate. Six pay levels same as CS. Performance reviewed annually by selection boards. 'Bonuses', promotions within the SFS and recommendations for Pres. ranks start with the selection boards and are approved by a Foreign Affairs interagency committee.

Adverse Actions -- Taken in accordance with FS Uniform Regulations/USDA/FAS procedures and regulations. Ultimate administrative appeal is to FS Grievance Board. Action not taken until review is completed.

Retirement -- Basic 50/20. Mandatory retirement at age 65. Regular FS retirement and new FS pension system.

Reduction-in-Force -- By strict OPM prescribed method.

Upward Mobility -- As positions are advertised in series with greater career potential, employees may enter the competition. May be highlighted as Upward Mobility or take place as part of the normal competitive process.

Reassignment -- May be reassigned as needed. Not particularly common. Tend to occupy the same position for an unspecified period of time.

Performance Evaluation -- Annually in specified form with position-based elements, standards. PMRS linked to pay. Low ratings may result in adverse actions.

Pay Systems -- General Schedule of 18 grades, with 10 steps within each of the 1st. 15 grades. Performance pay for PMRS employees (GM-13/15) does not conform with the steps but cannot exceed the top GS step of the employee's grade.

Training -- Job related is provided.

Awards -- Eligible for the awards under incentive awards program.

Reduction-in-Force -- None as such in the FS. Individuals may be selected out for low ranking and relative performance and because they exceed their time -in-class.

Upward Mobility -- Not applicable.

Reassignment -- Basis of FS system. May not stay in FAS/W longer than 8 years continuously or FAS/F longer than 15 years continuously. Tend to occupy a position for +/- 4 years on average.

Performance Evaluation -- Annually in specified form with position-based elements. Narrative comments is basis for board review.

Pay Systems -- 9 classes of 14 steps each.

Training -- Job related is provided in abundance.

Awards -- Eligible for awards under incentive awards program.

COMPARISON OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS

CIVIL SERVICE

FOREIGN SERVICE

Performance Management Objectives

same

- . Increase two-way communication
- . Enhance employee performance
- . Provide a just and equitable basis for:
 - 1) promotions
 - 2) WGs
 - 3) merit increases
 - 4) awards
 - 5) training
 - 6) adverse actions

Performance appraisal cycle:

same

July 1 to June 30

Elements and standards:

same

developed within 30 days of assignment and/or the beginning of appraisal period. Employee/supervisor develop elements and standards jointly. Position-based and reflect duties described in the position description. Standardized elements and standards are recommended for same or similar positions.

defined at the Fully Successful level; however, if the employee is having difficulty in one or several elements, it is recommended that the Does Not Meet level be specified also.

elements and standards are approved by supervisors.

of elements: 3 to 10; at least 1 critical; not all can be critical.

90 days minimum appraisal period.

At least 1 progress review during rating cycle is required besides final rating.

Use Decision Table to determine adjective rating.

Accomplishment write-ups required for each element.

Incentive Awards Committee

Selection Boards

- . recommends awards based upon performance

- . recommends awards

CIVIL SERVICE AND FOREIGN SERVICE
PROMOTIONS IN FAS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Foreign Service</u>		<u>Civil Service</u>	
	<u>Class</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Number</u>
1981	SFS	0	SES	1
	F01	0	GM15	9
	F02	0	GM14	13
	F03	0	GM13	18
1982	SFS	7	SES	0
	F01	5	GM15	5
	F02	10	GM14	6
	F03	5	GM13	10
1983	SFS	1	SES	0
	F01	4	GM15	5
	F02	5	GM14	8
	F03	6	GM13	9
1984	SFS	2	SES	0
	F01	3	GM15	0
	F02	4	GM14	0
	F03	8	GM13	6
1985	SFS	2	SES	0
	F01	5	GM15	1
	F02	6	GM14	0
	F03	3	GM13	4
1986	SFS	4	SES	0
	F01	4	GM15	2
	F02	9	GM14	5
	F03	14	GM13	5
1987	SFS	1	SES	0
	F01	3	GM15	1
	F02	7	GM14	2
	F03	15	GM13	13
1988	SFS	0	SES	0
	F01	3	GM15	3
	F02	6	GM14	8
	F03	6	GM13	14

APPLICANTS UNDER LATERAL ENTRY FOR FOREIGN SERVICE STATUS

	<u>NUMBER APPLIED</u>	<u>RACE</u>	<u>MALE FEMALE</u>	<u>NOT SELECTED FOR EXAM</u>	<u>FAILED EXAM</u>	<u>PASSED</u>
1982	39	white	male (30)	8	3	19
		white	female (8)	1	1	6
		black	male (1)	0	0	1
		TOTAL 26				
1983	22	white	male (18)	5	0	13
		white	female (4)	0	0	4
TOTAL 17						
1984	46	white	male (37)	19	1	17
		white	female (7)	3	1	3
		black	male (1)	1	0	0
		Asian	female (1)	0	0	1
TOTAL 21						
1985	16	white	male (10)	4	0	6
		white	female (3)	1	1	1
		black	male (2)	1	0	1
		Hispanic	male (1)	0	0	1
TOTAL 9						
1986	21	white	male (14)	6	3	5
		white	female (5)	0	1	4
		black	male (1)	0	0	1
		black	female (1)	0	1	0
TOTAL 10						
1987	15	white	male (12)	0	1	11
		white	female (3)	0	1	2
TOTAL 13						
1988	27	white	male (20)	3	1	16
		white	female (7)	1	1	5
TOTAL 21						

